

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INSPIRATION

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GEORGE L. RAYMOND

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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INSPIRATION

AN ATTEMPT TO DISTINGUISH RELIGIOUS FROM SCIENTIFIC TRUTH AND TO HARMONIZE CHRISTIANITY WITH MODERN THOUGHT

BY

GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND



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## PREFACE

Near the end of a life which began with a theological training, but has been spent mainly as a professor in college or university, I find myself with this book prepared for publication. Some of it was written several years ago; some of it has been written recently, but the whole has been carefully revised. It is the outgrowth of an endeavor—exceptional, as is thought, in its processes, tho not in its purposes—to find a way in which all that is essential to the methods and results of scientific and historic research can be accepted, while, at the same time, nothing that is essential to the theory or practise of religion need be rejected. That, in our age, any endeavor with this object in view is deserving of the effort expended upon it requires no arguing.

A few months ago I was dining beside a scholar who presides over one of the foremost educational institutions of New England. "Why is it," I asked him, "that Andover Seminary has so few students?" "Mainly," he answered, "because the New England colleges have so few who want to study theology." "Yes," I said, "they are waiting for my book." "What book?" he asked. "Mine, or some other," I answered, "written to show that a man can be both an out-and-out Christian and a thorough scientist;

can exercise to the full both faith and rationality; can be bound to a church for his support, yet be free in his methods of thinking." "A hard thing to prove," he said. "Yes," I replied, "but it must be proved by some one, or else religion itself can not hold the approval of most of us." Then I explained that, for years, while occupying a professorship necessarily bringing me into close relations with students proficient in oratory, I had noticed a gradual decrease in the proportionate number and quality of those entering the Christian ministry, altho many failing to do so had seemed not only particularly fitted for success in it, but particularly unfitted, intellectually, morally, or spiritually, for following with satisfaction to themselves any other calling.\* Their turning from the

\* The following enumeration of students and graduates in theological seminaries of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, as reported to the General Assembly for the years 1895 and 1907, was printed in *The Princeton* (N. J.) *Press* of September 28, 1907, under the signature of Rev. Lewis W. Mudge, D.D.

	Students.		Graduates.	
	1895	1907	1896	1907
Princeton.....	264	178	78	44
Auburn.....	112	62	42	20
Western.....	100	72	32	21
Lane.....	29	38	6	7
Kentucky.....	24	42	3	9
McCormick.....	208	106	78	27
San Francisco.....	31	12	14	..
German Dubuque.....	39	11	5	..
German Newark.....	61	22	8	2
Lincoln.....	40	51	9	2
Biddle.....	19	19	5	16
Omaha.....	23	26	8	7
Totals.....	950	639	288	155

These figures are still more significant in view of the great increase, during these twelve years, in the total population of the country and of the yet greater proportionate increase in the number of those attending the colleges from which the students of Presbyterian seminaries are drawn.

ministry, I said, so far as they had given expression to that which had influenced them, had seemed due less to any lack of sympathy with religion in general than to a repugnance to becoming special pleaders and hired advocates of what appealed to them as a narrow and biased, and, so far, uncourageous and unmanly method of accepting and interpreting religious dogmas and practises. Such being the case, I express to my neighbor my conception of the importance of one of the objects to be undertaken in this book—namely, the removing of difficulties in the way of those whose mental attitude is that of the students just described.

The serious reader will ask, at once, whether this undertaking is feasible; whether what is proposed can be done in any such way as to do justice to all the requirements of religion. If it can not be so done, then, of course, this book must prove a failure. It will merely add one more volume to the many, already too numerous, in which the spiritual is ignored for the sake of the comprehensible, or the comprehensible for the sake of the spiritual. This book can prove a success in the degree alone in which neither of these is ignored, but each is credited with the influence legitimate to it, and this in its entirety. But if it be feasible to attain such a result, so stated, why has it not been attained before? One reason is that it has not before been demanded, or, at least, not as universally as at present. Another reason is that the facts from

which deductions such as are to be presented in this book can be logically drawn had not been studied, were not understood, and, presumably, could not have been conceived by the theologians of even the last century, to say nothing of men like Calvin or Luther, or like Augustine or Aquinas.

At the same time it is somewhat remarkable that, even in such circumstances, some of the conclusions indicated in the pages that follow have not already been more widely recognized than is the case. Most of our Protestant churches, for instance, profess to accept the principles underlying the Protestant Reformation, especially the one assigning authority to the Christian Scriptures, and the one asserting the right of private judgment in interpreting these. But most of our Protestant theologians seem reluctant, at least, to admit that either principle should be carried to a logical conclusion. In doing this, as must be confessed, they are faithfully following the examples set by both Calvin and Luther. But historians, without exception, attribute mainly to these examples the sudden check put, in the sixteenth century, upon the progress of the Reformation. May future historians be saved from attributing to the same a like check put, in the twentieth century, upon the progress of all Christianity! Why is the danger of such a check a present menace? Because the science of the day trains the mind to be candid and logical; and theology is inclined to be neither. If, for instance, two pas-

sages of Scripture seem to conflict, and so evidently, too, that every thinking mind must perceive it, the theologian, instead of frankly admitting the fact and then trying to find a theory that will justify it as a fact, either denies that it is a fact, or, as will be shown hereafter, makes only one of the two passages authoritative.\* Again, while admitting, as a matter of theory, the right of private judgment, he by no means always acknowledges it in practise, especially when another's interpretation of Scripture differs greatly from his own. No one can deny that such attitudes of mind tend to lessen very considerably the influence of the reformed churches, while, at the same time, they do not strengthen that of the unreformed. Those in the reformed churches desire, as a rule, not less but more candor and logic, which is exactly what the unreformed are not prepared to give them; and those in the unreformed churches, if affected at all by a similar desire, are apt, like the French of our day, to look for the fulfilment of it beyond the confines of any church, even reformed, in which their demands can, at best, be only partly met. This is the same as to say that, in this age of general education and scientific thinking, religion, in order to preserve its influence over men, must be prepared, without prevaricating or hedging, to satisfy all the requirements of the rational nature. One object of the treatise that follows is to present a theory in accordance with which this can be done

\*See pages 142, 196, 199, 307, and 308.



As applied to practise, the aim of the book may be illustrated thus: Some time ago I attended a meeting of scientists. As I looked about me I became aware that, so far as I knew, not one of those present was considered by himself or by others to be what is conventionally termed religious. Yet in the unselfish, untiring and well-nigh unrewarded labor that every one of these seemed performing for the advancement of the knowledge, the health, and the comfort of his fellows, I recognized such devotion, conscientiousness, and charity as could not be rightly designated irreligious. About the same time my attention was called to a meeting of ecclesiastics. All who took part in it were, presumably, considered by themselves and by others to be religious in an exceptional degree. Yet no reported speech of any one of them happened to be devoid of a certain selfish, intolerant, and unmagnanimous disregard of the feelings and thoughts of others such as, so far as one could draw just conclusions from a few utterances, did not place the speaker outside the pale of those ordinarily supposed to be particularly characterized by distinctively Christ-like traits. In view of these facts, it seemed to me that it was about time for the world to have some criterion more trustworthy than those commonly accepted by which to judge of the kind of faith and life separating the religious from the non-religious. This seemed especially important in view of the influence which men of both types mentioned are constantly



exerting upon the young and the inexperienced. Is it not unfortunate that one of the first type, whom these can not but esteem and, therefore, instinctively strive to imitate, should be connected in their minds with irreligious and not infrequently injurious precepts and examples, which, if also imitated, can not but lead astray? And is it not equally unfortunate that a man of the second type whom the same classes can not fail often to disesteem, and, therefore, to strive not to imitate, should be the one connected in their minds with that which is religious and, as a rule, elevating and fitted to lead aright? Is there any need of preventing a man of either type from exerting the sort of influence for which his personal traits fit him? It does not seem to me that there is. But before this can be recognized by most men they require clearer views than they usually have with reference to the connection between Christianity as a system and the Christian as a subject of it. Here is a reason, therefore, in addition to reasons already given and to others naturally associated with each, seeming to justify, as applied to practise as well as to theory, an attempt, as in this book, to make a more careful study than has yet been undertaken of the nature of that phase of influence to which spiritually minded people believe that religion owes its source.

I may, perhaps, be excused for mentioning, before closing this Preface, two regards in which the thought presented in the pages following differs essentially

from that in almost all other works written with a somewhat similar intent. In the first place, while emphasizing the importance of rationality in religion, the arguments advanced are not in the least degree allied to those of "rationalism" in the materialistic sense in which this term is ordinarily used. On the contrary, they tend distinctly toward belief in the spiritual, and this to a degree not true of very many of the Christian discussions of our times. In the second place, while emphasizing spiritual discernment as necessary to the understanding of the literal statements of the Scriptures, the arguments are not advanced as pleas for—nor, indeed, against—any merely esoteric method of interpreting occult symbols or allegories. On the contrary, the whole line of thought tends distinctly toward confidence in the sufficient intellectual equipment of those who exercise merely honest and unbiased common sense.

GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

*November 1, 1907.*

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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INSPIRATION

## INTRODUCTION

Conditions of Prevailing Thought Which Occasioned This Book—Comprehensive Character of the Results Reached in It—Inspiration and Revelation—Apparent Inaccuracy in the Hebraic and Christian Scriptures—No Writings or Utterances Supposed to Be Inspired Are Free from Ambiguity, or from the Liability of Being Interpreted Differently—A Logical Mind Can Not Accept This Condition Unless It Perceive Some Reason for It—This Reason Must Be Found, if at All, in the Nature of the Spirit Inspiring, of Which We Can Not Know; or of the Man or Mankind Inspired, of Which We Can Know.

One who mingles much with educated men in our country will find large numbers of them doubting whether a modern mind, trained to observe scientifically and to reason logically, can without bias accept as true the form of religion most prevalent in our times, or, indeed, any religion, and yet honestly weigh all the arguments that can be brought against it. There must be some reason for their doubting this. To attribute the reason to the false working of their minds, as contrasted with the right working of the minds of other people, would be manifestly uncharitable and illogical. The doubters themselves are often men of exceptional capability and conscientiousness. All minds, of course, have their idiosyncrasies; but these alone are not sufficient to account for similar effects produced upon large classes of men who, above all things, are

thinkers. There must be something and often much in the external conditions to cause these effects. In the case that we are considering, the external conditions are the forms in which are presented what are termed the truths of religion. So far as a mind does not accept these forms because of something in themselves, we must hold that this something is either essential to the truth that is in the form or that it is non-essential to this truth. If essential, then there seems to be no escape from concluding that supposed truth which can not stand the tests of modern science and reasoning must, sooner or later, become wholly discredited. If non-essential, then every effort should be made to change the method of interpreting it and of separating it, so far as possible, from the essential. The pages that follow have been written upon the hypothesis that the latter supposition is correct, as well as to show why this may be supposed to be the case, and how the conditions occasioning it may be met.

An endeavor to deal with such subjects as these is an undertaking for which, in the present state of religious thought and life, no earnest man writing for earnest men need make excuses. One fact, however, in justice to the author ought to be stated. When he entered upon his work he had no conception of the comprehensiveness of the inferences which would logically follow upon obtaining from it any definite results. These inferences, one after another, have unfolded themselves from his line of thought as naturally as a

bud bursts through a branch from which it springs. Indeed, they have seemed inevitable; as inevitable to him as to some they must seem revolutionary. Notwithstanding their revolutionary semblance, however, and the consequent repulsion with which many a cautious and conscientious mind will undoubtedly greet them, it is his opinion that for the momentous problems involved the general conclusions reached afford the only rational and, at the same time, conservative and safe solution.

The subject to be developed necessitates making a thorough study of what is termed, when applied to its source, inspiration, and, when applied to its results, revelation. One must begin by ascertaining, if he can, how far the Church, or the Christian community, has a correct conception of their character, and therefore of the form of guidance which they are fitted to give. In order to answer these questions, the author, when he entered upon his work, tried first to determine, if possible, the nature of truth in general. But, very soon, the necessary connection between this subject and the particular religious aspects of it that occasioned the study rendered inevitable an extensive examination into the methods of statement and phraseology employed in the Hebraic and Christian Scriptures.

No one can honestly pursue such an examination for any considerable time without finding all his conceptions of the importance of his undertaking confirmed. In not a few but many cases what is said in the Scrip-



tures is apparently, at least, inaccurate. Quite frequently certain of their statements do not seem to accord with certain other of their statements; or with accepted principles of common sense and right conduct; or with well-ascertained facts of history and of science. Notice that the phrase used is "apparently" inaccurate. Many of the passages, upon examination, prove not to be so in reality. Possibly all of them could be proved not to be so. But "apparently" they are so. Nor that this should be the case will seem strange to any one who merely recalls the thousands of books crowding every large theological library which have been written for the sole purpose of proving that, in references made to subjects of which they treat, Biblical inaccuracy, tho apparent, is not—when the words are properly interpreted and understood—actual; for the purpose of proving, in other words, that in many cases the Scriptures either do not say what they mean or do not mean what they say.

As implied in the opening paragraph of this Introduction, the first inclination of a mind, influenced at all by the condition just indicated, is to discredit the Scriptures altogether, as well as the whole system of religion unfolded in them. How can one believe that to be true, is asked, which, in so many of its details, appears to be untrue? If, with this question upon his lips, one still cling to a hope in the existence of inspiration, his next move will be to discover, if possible, some form of supposed revelation that is not characterized



by what seems inaccuracy. No one acquainted with the subject fails to know that this is something which one may seek forever and not find. Every student of the influence exerted by such writings as the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, or the Mormon Bible knows that what is true of the Hebraic and Christian Scriptures is true of all the others. All have given rise to different sects whose differences have been occasioned by different methods of understanding and of interpreting the same passages in the same writings. But besides writings, there are other agencies through which it is supposed that spiritual truth can be revealed. In certain communities there are official leaders, who individually, as in the Roman and Mormon churches, or collectively, as in churches that make much of councils, are credited with giving forth what they have to say under, at least, divine superintendence. But this superintendence does not prevent the same conditions occasioned by sacred writings. There is apparently no end to the different interpretations given to the same utterances; or to the different degrees in which these utterances are supposed to be inspired. Besides official religious leaders, there have been also—and, apparently, from the beginning of history—individuals whose claim to inspiration has been based upon evidence which they themselves have been supposed to furnish. They are represented in our own time and country by the clairvoyants and mediums of what is termed spiritism. Are the communications

of these then characterized, as a rule, by accuracy? Certainly not; and, probably, few intelligent spiritists would think otherwise. Each of these, apparently, has a way of attributing a part of what seems revealed to some undeveloped or—what the outside world would term—evil spirit. This fact alone—and no one will dispute it—is sufficient to show that the spiritists have not found everything supposed to be revealed to be equally trustworthy. Moreover, besides this, many of them, probably the majority, refuse to accept much that is accredited to those whom they consider highly developed spirits, owing, as is said, to the different “conditions” prevailing in the spirit-world and in our own.

It is evident, in view of such facts, that a logical mind must do one of two things—either reject wholly everything in the nature of inspiration, or, for some reasons that need not now be discussed, accept a part of it. So much that is best in the world has been directly traceable to the influence of the latter course that one would not like to abandon it without a struggle. But how can he not abandon it and yet act rationally? This is one of the questions involving, more or less, all of the others, which this book has been written to answer. At first, as has been intimated, the author had hoped to answer it by such a study of the nature of truth and of the consequent methods of interpreting passages supposed to communicate it as is made in this book between pages 9 and 49, Chapters I and II. But

after a little a different conclusion was necessitated. All that is unfolded in these chapters is relevant to the subject, and important, so far as it goes. But it does not go deep enough, nor is it broad enough in its applicability. Suppose it to be all true. Suppose the Christian Scriptures—suppose all writings or utterances of an inspired religious leader or teacher—to require, as there indicated, an interpretation according to some method of philosophic inquiry, historic research, or literary criticism. Why should this be the case? Why should they not have been so indited as to be understood by that vast majority of people who are not philosophers, historians, or litterateurs? Why should any communications be so written or uttered as to render not only probable but possible innumerable misinterpretations? How can we reconcile an ambiguous result with attributing it to an Omniscient Cause aiming to produce the opposite? In no way whatever. Our only logical conclusion must be that there was no reason for seeking to avoid the divergences of interpretation that so perplex us.

Why, then, was there no reason for this? In view of the Source to which religious people ascribe the ambiguous result, the answer must be that any different result was not necessary, or not possible, or, at least, not in accordance with the requirements of the conditions. Of what conditions? Of those pertaining, on the one hand, to the Spirit inspiring, and, on the other hand, to the man, and the mankind, inspired. With

reference to one of these factors—the conditions pertaining to the Spirit—we can, of course, only make surmises. With reference to the other factor, however—the conditions pertaining to man or mankind—it is different. These are clearly within the reach of human understanding. To investigate the methods in which the mind can receive and utilize any influence whatever that affects it is a perfectly legitimate function of psychology, and this is that which is to be done in the present volume. In order to avoid going outside of the province of psychology, and to keep the lines of thought within what all will acknowledge to be logical limits, few references, and these only indirect ones, will be made to purely theological questions such as otherwise one might wish to discuss—questions like those concerning the nature of the inspirational influences considered in themselves, and the differences in their sources and effects. The character of the general argument to be presented, and the considerations presumably having weight with those for whom it was chiefly written, seemed to demand that it should deal almost exclusively, as the reader will find that it does, with an examination of the evidences of the mind's being adapted by nature to be affected according to the methods which in religion are attributed to inspiration, and, in connection with this, an examination of the ways in which, when so affected, the mind naturally expresses itself in thought, word, and action.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF TRUTH AS INDICATED BY WHAT MEN SEEK WHEN THEY SEARCH FOR IT, AND THINK THAT THEY FIND WHEN THEY OBTAIN IT

Methods Through Which It Is Proposed to Ascertain the Nature of Truth—Scientists and Philosophers Search for Truth as Something Behind Appearances in Space—And in Time—Therefore Conceive It to Be Not Alone in the Appearances Themselves—But in These as Related to Certain Methods of Operation—Same Facts Shown by the Treatment Given to Formal Statements—The Truth in Them Discovered by Regarding Relations to Surrounding Circumstances—Therefore to Methods of Operation—Absolute Truth as Existing Without Reference to Relations—Necessity of Considering Methods of Operation Shown by What Men Find When They Think That They Have Obtained Truth—Meanings of the Adjective *True*—Further Meanings—Its Meanings When Material or Bodily Conditions Are Compared With Mental or Spiritual—Its Meanings When Applied to Language—The False in Language Is a Want of Conformity to a Method of Operation in a Mental Process—Summary of the Meanings of the Word *True*—Of the Word *Truth*.

The object of this essay is to consider, in view of important facts indicated in the Introduction, the nature and influence upon thought and action of what is termed inspired or revealed truth. This object necessitates, first, an understanding of what is meant by truth in general. To determine this, the most sensible way seems to be to ascertain, if we can, exactly what it is that men who use the term mean by it. How can we best ascertain this? By examining their definitions of it? Certainly. But we can do more. As we all know,

actions sometimes speak louder than words. Therefore, in connection with such definitions of the truth as men have formulated consciously, let us observe their actions also when dealing with it; and the conceptions of it which these actions unconsciously reveal. While pursuing this course, in order to reach results sufficiently comprehensive, let us start with an analysis, as complete as we can make, of the different methods through which such self-revelations can be rendered possible. Of these methods, we shall find that there are three; in other words, that men indicate their conceptions of the nature of truth by their dealings, first, with its sources; second, with its substance; and, third, with its results; or, to extend each of these three heads, first, by what they seek when they search for the truth; second, by what they think that they find when they obtain it; and, third, by what they do when they receive or impart its influence.

In accordance with this analysis, let us begin by learning what we can from the sources to which, when searching for truth, men are accustomed to attribute it. Through observing what they seek in such cases, we certainly ought to gather some suggestions with reference to what they think it to be when obtained. Scientists and philosophers investigate, as we say, the appearances surrounding them. But what in these do they investigate? Merely the appearances as appearances? Do they believe that they can obtain the truth thus—even a part of it, to say nothing of the whole of



it? Not at all. They often tear each superficial appearance into shreds. To detect its subtle elements, they hunt for them as for hidden treasure. Then, looking, if possible, through the elements, they strain their vision onward and inward, as if, beyond the whole material fabric, were something for which they still must search. Their efforts often are of no avail. They prove, at least, that each who undertakes them has a firm conviction that the truth can be discovered through the outward forms of nature, else why should he examine them? And they prove, as well, his firm conviction that the truth itself is not to be attributed to anything that is wholly in the outward forms, else why should he, in his examination, try to probe beneath them?

Appearances are not confined to stationary forms. Another element is potent in the universe. The folds upon earth's mighty vestment rise and fall. The fickle shadows come and go. The brilliant colors separate and blend. One listens and he hears the bustle of perpetual movement. He infers that somewhere underneath the movement there must throb a heart of life; that there must be an occasioning condition, and that connected with the condition he shall be able to discover the truth. And so he uses other tests upon the forms. He puts them through augmented changes for experiment. He boils, he burns, he dissipates, he fuses, he compounds them. His efforts often end in no discoveries, and yet they prove, at least, his firm conviction



that the truth may be discovered through the outward changes, else why should he examine them? They prove, as well, his firm conviction that the truth itself is not to be attributed to anything that is wholly in the outward changes, else why should he, in each experiment, try so hard to attain to that which has conditioned them?

Indeed, if the truth were wholly in outward shapes or changes, why would it not be patent to the eyes of every one? To recognize it, what would be the need of more consideration than a single superficial glance? Yet all the world admit that truth is something that in any large degree is revealed alone to one with penetration, perseverance, and a more than ordinary measure of intelligence.

But to say that the truth for which these men are searching lies not wholly in the outward shape or change is to make no more than a negation. Considered positively, what is this truth? As has been said, it is something underneath appearances in space or in time. But is it underneath appearances in one of these alone, or in both? The moment that the question is asked, every one must answer "In both." The rocks, as they appear in space alone, can never teach what is meant by geologic truth; nor can the stars, when merely standing still "like Joshua's sun at Ajalon," teach what is meant by astronomic truth. To the study of rocks or stars as they appear in space these searchers after truth must always join a conception of the influence of time.

It is this conception alone which causes the scientist to break apart the rocks in order to detect their evidences of development, or to adjust his telescope to the stars in order to make out their variations of movement. So with effects that appear in time. No one can understand the truth with reference to the successive notes of a trumpet or a violin until he has studied the relative contractions of the spaces through which different quantities of wind have passed, or the relative spaces through which different chords have been stretched, or have been made to vibrate. Now, granting this to be as stated, what is *the truth* which, as a result of examining effects both in space and in time, the man, at last, imagines himself to have discovered? What is it, except what may be termed *the method of operation*? The truth concerning a tree is learned when it is ascertained how that bulk which is apprehended in space has been affected by that growth which is apprehended in time. The truth concerning a tune is learned when it is ascertained how that note which is apprehended in time has been affected by that string which is apprehended in space. With this conception in mind, let us go back now to notice if it be confirmed by what we know of the aims of the scientist or the philosopher. We need not linger long here. All recognize that no one is a scientist in reality who merely knows, no matter how extensively, the surface-facts with reference to shapes or changes. Before we can call him this, we must believe that he has looked beneath appearances, and through their agency

has been led to apprehend, if not to comprehend, the operations and the methods of the operations which have brought things to their present state, and which are manifested in the fulfilment of what are termed laws. And is it not a fact that a man is acknowledged to rank high in science and philosophy in the degree alone in which he has been able to discover and to prove that certain of these methods operate identically beneath phenomena that in themselves are different? Did not Newton, Spencer, and Darwin attain their eminence mainly because, in the opinion of their followers, they had the penetration to detect some one of these methods whose operations can be illustrated by analogous occurrences in all the different departments and developments of nature? Some method of this kind, some principle of inevitable applicability, according to which each endeavors to explain the facts of nature—in other words, to which each endeavors to show that these facts conform—constitutes the basis of his scientific or philosophic system. This is that, in order to discover which the shapes and changes of the universe have been examined by him. This is that which, when discovered, he considers to be *the truth*.

That such is the case is exemplified by his treatment not only of the forms of nature, but of the statements of others representing what, before his time, they have learned from these forms. It is exemplified in his treatment even of verbal statements that he believes to contain the truth. Take, for instance—because directly

in line with the chief object of our inquiry—the way in which a Biblical scholar examines the text of the Scriptures even when he considers it to be inerrant. Is he satisfied to accept the surface-meaning of the text? Does he not rather search beneath it, just as we have found that scientists do when trying to discover the truth through the forms of matter? He doubts, he reexamines, and with any number of learned opinions weighed against his own decision, not infrequently, he ventures to uphold it. In doing this, he proves that he believes that the truth, tho exprest in a form of thought, is not identical with the form itself, but underneath it.

Now, underneath a form of thought, what is it that must be considered before we can know the whole truth that it expresses? When wise men hear a statement, what is the chief criterion by which they test its credibility? Is it not the circumstances in which it is uttered, or to which it applies? And what are circumstances? Are they not things that stand around, that come before, beside, or after? To regard a thing in connection with its circumstances, what is this but to regard it as a thing acted on, and thus as a thing that is connected with other things that act—that is to say, as in itself a part of a process, as in itself a constituent element of an operation?

But an operation in its progress may pass through many different phases. At any given time, each of these phases in succession may represent the method

operating through them all. If when the sun is on the horizon, one affirm that in an hour it will be dark, he may be saying what is true or false, true if it be evening, false if it be morning. The truth or falseness which is not determined by a similarity or difference in the statement—is it not determined by the degree in which the statement fits, or is true to methods as these really operate in nature? In nature it grows dark at eve, but not at dawn. Again, if one place a bud in the sunlight, it becomes a flower; but if one place a flower there, it withers. Therefore, in making a statement concerning the effect of sunshine on the appearance of a bush, he must regard the condition that it has reached in the process of its growth. Once more, there is one method of operation in religious life. But if a patriarch in the early ages became religious, his impulse to duty might have prompted him to multiply the number of his wives (Deut. 25; 5-9). A similar impulse in modern times may prompt a Christian to content himself with one wife; and in making statements concerning the effects of religion on the lives of either of these men, one must regard the circumstances in which each is placed. These examples show that no one is fit to judge of the truth if devoid of sufficient insight—to say nothing of experience—to enable him to look beneath the formula. Precisely similar statements may be true or false even when applied to similar occurrences, if these be manifested in different circumstances of time or of place.

Nevertheless most men believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth. But where is it, and when do statements give expression to it? In the realm of nature, the absolute seems to be suggested by a similar method indicated through all the different phases which different substances assume. The philosopher discovers what he conceives to be the absolute so far alone as he discovers this method into which all differences fit, or to which they can all be manifested to be true. Why should not the same principle apply universally?

This question will be recognized by all as having a certain pertinence. But can the conception from which it springs stand the test of analysis? Appropriate as this conception may be when the term *truth* is used in an abstract and general sense, is it equally so when used in a concrete and specific sense? The answer to this question necessitates our taking up the second topic mentioned at the opening of this chapter, namely, men's conceptions of truth as indicated by their dealings with what they suppose to be its substance—*i.e.*, by what they think that they find when they obtain it. When a man says that he has the truth, or, to begin with the adjective, that a certain thing is true, what does he mean? Primarily, the adjective refers—does it not?—to that which conforms to something, or fits it. Nothing is true, except as it is true to some other appearance or conception with which it is compared. This meaning is evident, even when we use the term merely in contrast to the term



*false*. When we say that a *door* is true, indicating that it is what it appears to be, that it is really a door, and not an imitation of one, we mean that it conforms, or is fitted, to that conception of a door which we have in mind. In this use of the word *true*, one might think that we were merely comparing appearances with supposed appearances; but notice that we are also taking into consideration certain conditions underlying the appearances, which conditions cause the appearances, so to speak, to operate as they do upon the eye. The comparison is between the effect of a real door and the effect which some supposed door might have upon some supposed spectator. This, in some of its applications, is not an uncommon use of the adjective. For instance, the sentence, "John is his true name," implies a comparison between the effect of a certain form upon us in calling to our thoughts or lips the word *John* and the effect which some other form produces, or which John's supposed form, if present, would produce upon a supposed acquaintance.

But there are other possible ways of interpreting this phrase, *the door is true*. It may mean that the door corresponds in material, size, shape, color, or, perhaps, in only one of these regards, to some other doors which are near it. In these cases, too, it is evident that the comparison is not between appearances except so far as they are considered effects produced by certain like methods of operation upon the eye.



Or the phrase may mean that the door fits into its doorway, or conforms to the architectural design of the room or building in which it is seen; and, in this case, there may be involved no likeness whatever in the appearances as mere appearances. It is in the effects which certain principles controlling the construction of straight lines, angles, or curves have upon both the door and its framework, or upon the door and also upon the windows, cornices, and gables accompanying it. The word *true*, therefore, does not imply necessarily a comparison between external forms or appearances. Nor, again, does it imply necessarily a comparison between the substances of which these forms are compounded, because the constituent elements are often known to differ as widely as the constituted appearances. A painting, for instance, may be true to a hall in which it is hung. Every one of the cases mentioned, however, does imply a correspondence between conditions beneath the forms, which conditions produce effects. Whatever produces an effect, operates. If anything operate upon different material elements in such a manner as to indicate similarity, the similarity, which can not be in the matter of the elements, must be in the manner—in other words, in the *method of operation*.

This statement will be rendered more apparent when we apply the word *true* not to that which is made to conform or to be fitted to material conditions, but to mental conditions. A man's words or deeds, for ex-

ample, are said to be *true* to his opinions or character. How can they be true to that which in itself is invisible? The visible can not conform to the invisible in form or in substance. It must conform to it in the manner, or in the *method of operation*. One says, again, that the color upon a maiden's cheek is *true*. By this he means that the flush or the pallor there is produced according to a *method* that conforms to that of nature—is not a result of mere painting or washing, but is a result of the movement of the unseen blood within the system; and, more than this often, that it is conformed to unseen mental excitement or depression. This use of the term is revealed still more plainly when we come to consider the possibility of the existence in man of both a body and a soul. The body is material; the soul, so far, at least, as we can become acquainted with it, is immaterial. How now can the bodily expression be true to the soul's experience? In formal appearance, frowns, gestures, words, do not resemble anger, feeling, or thought. Evidently the expression is *true* in the degree only in which it represents, by way of analogy or correspondence, the method in which one thought or feeling succeeds another.

It may be asked, perhaps, if single words do not often give expression to thoughts, and how it is that a single word can represent a *method of operation*, which term *operation* necessarily implies a process. The answer is that a single word does not express

thought except so far as the word may be perceived to be related in some way to a series of words. One asks, "Do you love me?" The answer is "Yes," perhaps; but this "yes" has no meaning, conveys no thought, except to one acquainted with the previous question. Then it is recognized to be a short way of indicating the process which would be fully expressed by saying, "I love you." A child, confronted with a fearful sight, cries out, "Oh!" This "oh" conveys no unmistakable meaning except to one who has knowledge of its occasion. Then it is recognized to be an effect of the process of thought or feeling started by the fearful sight. The fact is that thoughts in the mind invariably flow consecutively, one combination of them following another. For this reason each combination, except when expressed in an abbreviated form, because this is supposed to be sufficient to suggest the longer form, is invariably represented in what is termed a sentence. A sentence always implies or expresses a subject, a predicate, and an object. This is true even where the predicate is a passive verb, because, in this case, the subject and object are the same. A subject, a predicate, and an object indicate a beginning of a movement, a movement, and an end of it. A movement is an operation. Therefore every sentence expresses an operation. And not only so, but it expresses a method of operation. Sense is not indicated simply by an order of sequence in words. This order may differ in different languages, and even

in the same language. "If so, I will go," means exactly the same as "I will go, if so." Sense is indicated by the order of dependence in the words; that is, by the method in which one word is made to affect or to be affected by another. Accordingly, it may be said that every sentence manifests a method of operation. Moreover, as this is manifested in language, and as language is always representative of something that is not language, the method of operation in the words must be representative of one that takes place in a sphere which is not that of words. If one say, "I went there," he means that the method of operation in his words represents the method of operation in his deeds.

If the order of dependence of the words upon one another—*i.e.*, the method of operation indicated by them—do not agree with the method in some other department which they are supposed to represent, we have what is false. It may be made false either by representing, as if it had existed, an operation that has never taken place; or by misrepresenting an operation that has taken place. In the latter case, this might be done by substituting some fictitious subject, predicate, or object in place of one really portraying the conditions, or by inverting the order in which one of these parts of the sentence should be made to depend upon other parts. This is so evident that it need not be illustrated.

Accordingly, we see that our use of the words *true*

and *truth* indicates conformity—based upon comparison—not alone to forms or to formulæ, but to methods of operation. If we say that a man is *true* to himself, we seldom mean merely that his deeds or words compare with other of his deeds or words. We usually mean that the methods of operation in them compare with methods of operation in others of them, or we may mean not that they compare with words or deeds at all, but that they compare with certain varieties of mental operations which both represent, and which take place in the dissimilar and non-apparent realm of consciousness. If we say that a friend is true to another, we seldom mean that this friend's face, deeds, words, thoughts, feelings, or even wishes are similar to the other man's. We may mean merely that the friend, with his own face, etc., has a way of acting in such a manner as to carry out the other man's purposes. It is a law of life that one's actions are so ordered as to secure his own welfare. If his friend's actions be made to accomplish the same result, then this friend is *true* to him. When a man is true to God, he is true to the character of God, as this has been revealed to him through methods of operation in nature and in revelation. This thought will be brought out more distinctly hereafter. At present we need dwell no longer on what is indicated by the adjective *true*. We have traced it from its lowest to its highest signification. When attributed to any form, material or imagined, of structure, deed, or word, the

adjective indicates that the form is conformed to another form, with which, in whole or in part, in general effect or in underlying conditions, it is compared. The fact of conformity is made evident sometimes because the forms appear alike, by which we mean that they operate similarly on the eye, ear, or some other sense, or, at times, on the imagination regarding them. The same fact is made evident at other times because, while they do not appear alike, nevertheless they manifest certain results of like methods which, in connection with different existences, or, possibly, in different spheres of existence—one material and one mental—have been operating to produce the appearances.

*Truth* is the substance of that of which *true* is the quality. As what is termed an *expression*, whether made in a form of words or of deeds, of literary art or of plastic art, can not invariably conform in form or appearance to what is audible, visible, or tangible in the external world, *the truth* in such an expression can not be said to be determined invariably by anything except the conformity of the method of the expression's operation upon the mind (whether influencing intelligence or emotion) to the method of operation (upon either the senses or the mind) indicated in existing external appearances or processes to which the expression refers. In a similar way, *the truth*, when the term is applied generically, is determined by the conformity of the method of the expression's operation



upon the mind to some one method of operation in the universe, to which method all methods under particular appearances or processes are supposed to be organically related. It is in this latter sense that the truth can be said to be infinite, eternal, and absolute.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF TRUTH AS INDICATED BY WHAT MEN DO WHEN RECEIVING AND IMPARTING ITS INFLUENCE

Objections to the View Presented in the First Chapter—Truth, as Exprest in Language, Should Not Be Confounded with the Formula; Illustrated from Methods of Interpreting the Bible—Its History Noteworthy for the Methods of Life Which It Illustrates—Its Prophecies Valuable for Their Fulfilment Not Only, but Applicability to Laws Operating Everywhere—Confirmation of This Principle of Interpretation of the Bible in Its Explanations—Its Arguments—Its Injunctions—Real Meaning Lost When Truth Is Supposed to Be Conformed to Formulæ Alone, and Not Also to Methods of Operation—The Use of the Word *Truth* in the Bible—Illustrations—Inferences—Truth Is Perceived in the Process of Searching for It—Supposing Change Inconsistent with Absoluteness in Truth Is a Source of Both Infidelity and Bigotry—Right Views of Truth as a Corrective of These—The Truth in Revealed and Natural Religion Connected with a Conception of Method—One Recognizing This May Be a Friend to Both Progress and Permanence—Inferences from the View Here Presented—A Few Forms in Space May Reveal Universal Methods—One Mind May Represent God—And One Life, if Full of Love—The Mission of the Friend—Comfort in This Suggestion—The Changes of a Few Moments May Reveal Universal Methods—Child or Man with Short or Long Life May Both Have Experience of Them.

Before concluding the subject begun on page 10 it is necessary to notice men's conceptions of the truth as indicated by their dealings with its results—*i.e.*, by what they do when receiving or imparting its influence. Some may not perceive how, if the truth be not identical with a form of statement in a creed or a dogma, it can affect thought or action in the degree in which it should.

They may find fault with a theory which seems to involve a weakening not only of speculative doctrine, but of practical faith, because lessening confidence in those statements on which spiritual life must depend for guidance. An endeavor will be made now to show that this theory does not have the effect thus attributed to it, but rather the opposite.

It seems to be a legitimate inference, from what has been said already, that, to be rightly influenced by a statement, we need to be influenced by something more than the statement itself. But the same inference may be drawn as a result of other considerations. For instance, if truth were identical with a formula presenting it, why would not one's wisdom be proportioned to his memory? But of course it is not. Again, why is candor necessary in order to attain success in an intellectual investigation or charity in a religious one? How can wise philosophers or earnest theologians, convinced to the contrary, too, yield a conscientious toleration to the views of their opponents? With what reason can they, in their words as well as in their deeds, virtually act upon the hypothesis that truth may be expressed in statements diametrically opposed to those that they themselves make? How could one affirm of two such statements, "Both may be true," unless intending to admit, and conscious that the one to whom the assertion is address will just as readily admit, that by the truth something is meant which is communicated through the statement, but is not by any means iden-

tical with it. Or, to apply the same thought where, in this connection, it will have the most significance—*i.e.*, to the statements of creeds or dogmas of which mention has just been made—what church is there that fails to recognize the necessity, where one is to be influenced, as he should be, by such statements, of that spiritual discernment of which the Apostle Paul speaks when, in 1 Cor. 2; 14, he says that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, . . . because they are spiritually discerned”? What is spiritual discernment? Let us consider it for a little, and, that there may be no doubt as to its meaning, let us examine it where there is the least possible opportunity of admitting a difference between the phraseology and the meaning which the phraseology is intended to convey; let us apply it, that is, to the words of the Bible.

The greater portion, perhaps, of this book is composed of history and prophecy. Who imagines that the history in it is valuable chiefly on account of the events related considered merely as events? Is it not rather on account of the events considered as illustrative of principles, illustrative—*i.e.*, of the *methods* of the divine government, of the modes according to which spiritual laws *operate*? Do commentators or do preachers represent that the mere memory of the transactions recorded in the book is more important than the morals to be drawn from the transactions which, in the order of their occurrence, indicate the methods of the usual development of religious life? Are not the individuals

and the nations mentioned in the book understood to be typical of other individuals and nations? Are not their experiences recognized to be intended to reveal primarily the methods in which doubt or faith and sin or righteousness in every age and country are either punished or rewarded? Is it not the revelation of these methods that renders possible a sermon based upon a story in the Bible? Is it not the possibility of our conforming our own lives to these methods that renders it possible for us to be benefited by the truth derivable from the story? Certainly the last four questions can be answered in the affirmative. If not, the "higher criticism" of the last two decades would not have been able to persuade so many to acknowledge that the unscientific writers of the Bible could draw their lessons from what are, possibly, mere traditions and legends, and yet not impair one's faith in the spiritual truth contained in them. Why should not truth be revealed through them as well as through the purely imagined figures used by David in his psalms, or the imagined parables used by Jesus in his discourses?

The same principle applies to the prophecy of the Bible. Of what special value to our time is it to be told that Tyre or Sidon *shall be* destroyed on account of wickedness? While comparing dates we learn, of course, that these denunciations of the cities came before the destructions of them; and our faith in prophecy may be strengthened by noticing the fact. Yet the sole value of passages of this kind does not rest in such

an application of them; nor their chief value. Why do men to-day read and reread these same passages? Why does the clergyman preach about them? Is it not because it is felt that they have a significance for all time as well as for the times in which they were uttered? Do not methods of operation evidenced in prophecy as well as in history repeat themselves? Altho certain words used may have been uttered in denunciation of particular cities, and fulfilled with literal exactness as applied to them, may not the methods exprest in the words be applied to every town or country in which existing evils may provoke similar violence? The world first learned of the philosophy of history from Herder. The Church, if it had had but very little of its treasured "spiritual discernment," might have learned of the same from Moses, and thus proved the prestige which the children of eternity ought to have over those of time.

Now let us turn from history and prophecy to those parts of the Bible in which the Scriptural reasons for the uses of both have been distinctly stated. How many times, and in how clear language, are we informed that certain persons and events are to be interpreted representatively! How many times that Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Jonah, are typical of the Christ! How many times that the flood, the exodus, the wandering in the wilderness, the lifting up of the serpent, are emblematical of a universal method operating everywhere, and through which man can be delivered from

sin! How many times is the word Israel or Babylon employed, not with literal exactness, but to indicate, by way of metonymy, a class of people inclined to righteousness or to unrighteousness!

Those parts of the Bible which are not devoted to history or prophecy or explanations of their methods of imparting truth may be classified under the head either of arguments or of injunctions. Let us notice what we can learn from these. Through arguments, truth is demonstrated. Through injunctions, it is merely stated. How is truth demonstrated in the Bible? The Apostle Paul, whether writing to the Romans or to the Hebrews, argues thus: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4; 3). Through faith, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and countless others "obtained a good report" (Heb. 11; 39). Therefore, if the Christian believe, his faith also shall be so counted, and he also shall obtain a good report. And again, all that priests and sacrifices of the former Testament accomplished, the Christ of whom they were symbolical has accomplished (Heb. 10; 12). Therefore the Christian, different as are the forms of his religion, is saved according to the same method. But evidently arguments of this kind have no force whatever, except so far as it is recognized that the truth of religion consists less in conformity to the apparent *form* than to the *method of operation* which this form exemplifies. Or let us recall the words of the Christ. We are told that he never spake without



a parable (Mark 4; 34). How do parables present the truth? By means of a parallel instance. They illustrate a principle applicable to one phase of life, through pointing to the way in which it operates in another real or fancied phase. They indicate the working of a law in one department or development of nature, through instancing its operation in a corresponding department or development. And they have no force whatever; they suggest no arguments at all, except so far as mankind recognizes that there is a sense in which to find the one method operating in all different departments and developments of nature is to find the truth. The words which caused the common people to affirm that the Master spake "as one having authority" (Matt. 7; 29) were almost invariably these statements of parallels. "Behold the fowls of the air," he said; "... your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6; 26). "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7; 11). "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7; 16). Such were the statements of the Christ; and not alone in his case, but from the time when he stood upon the shores of Galilee, without one priest to place a hand upon his head and ordain him as a messenger of God, down to the present, in the cases of all men whom the people hear with gladness, as they throng the



halls of all the sects, statements in the form of parables or parallels have had an influence beyond all others in proving to men the presence of a mind that has penetrated to the sources of truth, and can reveal it. Why? Because the masses have recognized the connection between the truth and a method of operation applicable universally.

From the arguments of the Bible let us turn now to its injunctions. How are these presented? If its arguments affirm conformity to like methods operating beneath different effects which are mentioned, its injunctions imply this conformity. They refer to one series of effects that necessarily suggests another. Indeed, one could almost assert that that which mainly causes the Scriptural precepts to be accepted by so many with the authority of absolute truth is this fact. They are precepts which it can be said that men of every age and place, the Hindu and the Hottentot, the Englishman and the Egyptian, can recognize to be truthful. The more they search the book, too, the more they find in it passages that can apply to almost every series of their own experience and of their neighbors', and equally well to almost every series of events in the history of the human race and of the material world. Upon whatever ground a man may base his confidence in the Bible, the testimony of every thoughtful mind, the implication of every Scriptural discourse, the confession of every new convert, proves that a main source of Scriptural authority lies in the

fact which Coleridge stated when he said, "It finds me." Here is a book which satisfies the wants of human souls, just as the earth about one satisfies the wants of human bodies. The force of the argument of Coleridge is derived from the inference that the Power which made man must have made the world, and that inasmuch as the precepts of the Bible accord with the laws which operate in the world they must accord with the purposes of this Power. It would be difficult to recall a single Biblical statement of a spiritual truth which can not be illustrated by showing the application of the methods which it indicates to the methods operating in the realms of intellect and of physics. For instance, take a passage like the following: "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5; 19). The analogy is obvious. Pour not water on fire. Extinguish not the life of one element by adding another hostile to it. Do not drive away spirituality by bringing in worldliness.

There are other cases in which the method indicated is less easy to recognize. In these we need to remember this—that truths are simply finite, transient, and concrete embodiments of the truth which is infinite, eternal, and absolute; and that in order to perceive the latter in a given formula, we must distinguish it from what is merely finite, transient, and concrete. For example, take a statement like the following: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16; 31). The truth that is to influence

us in this is either in the concrete transient formula, or in the absolute, eternal method of operation indicated by the formula. But if it be in the formula, we can not reconcile the statement with such statements as the following, which also are in the Bible: "Abraham believed God"—without the words *Jesus Christ* added—"and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4; 3); "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness"—without mention of believing—"is accepted" (Acts 10; 35); "These, having not the law"—without any reference even to a knowledge of *Jesus Christ*—"are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2; 14). Accordingly we must conclude that the absolute, eternal truth in the phrase, "Believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt be saved," is less in the formula than in the *method* indicated by it. This method grows clear to a finite mind in the proportion in which it is translated into finite terms, or, better, is made definite. These two words, *Jesus Christ*, are intended to remind one of what that person said and did when representing, so far as this was possible in a human form, the character of the deity. To one who recalls the method of the representation, the words make the injunction well-nigh infinitely clearer to comprehension. He should guard against thinking, however, that they are more important than the method which they are intended to illustrate. The words are definitive and not infinitive. The absolute and eternal truth which they

are used in order to make clear is the need of having faith in spiritual supervision, love, or aid. In every phase of natural life, all persons who are comparatively ignorant, weak, and sinful need to trust for guidance in the wise, the strong, and the loving, and, for the highest guidance, in the highest wisdom, strength, and love, hence in the deity. To define this method of salvation by annexing the words *Jesus Christ* to the statement, and causing us to think of what he said and did, may communicate good tidings to the souls who otherwise might have too vague notions of the unseen deity; but it does not, save in a negative sense, communicate bad tidings to the souls who can not, or who do not, know of the definition which makes the infinite truth more finite. Considered in relation to the context and with an accurate conception of the meaning of the words *believe*, *saved*, and *Jesus Christ*, the passage quoted expresses a truth fundamental to all religious character and charity. But divorced from its connection, no one can know that *believe* means more than intellectual assent, or *saved* more than mere comfort in this world, or *Jesus Christ* more than the being who is sending people to perdition in Michelangelo's picture of the "Last Judgment."

Once more, not only in the history, prophecy, arguments, and injunctions of the Bible do we find that the truth which men are to accept and obey involves conformity to a *method of operation*, but also, and in

the clearest light, in passages in which the sacred writers have employed the word *truth*. The Bible does indeed apply the term to language. "I tell you the truth," said Jesus (John 16; 7). But what was this truth? If it were something that he could illustrate by one of the parables which he was constantly using, then it was a method. Moreover, he said not only, "I tell you the truth," but also (John 14; 6) "I am the truth"; and one can not account for such a use of terms unless conceiving of the truth as something different from words, tho, of course, it may also include them.

What did the Christ mean by the expression? What could he have meant except that he conceived of himself as the truth just as all nature is the truth—conceived of himself as a representative of the character of the Creative Power? But how is character represented? Always through methods of operation. "What is truth?" asked Pilate of Jesus (John 18; 38); and was answered—in not the words but the deeds of the Master—that one acts according to the methods of truth when long-suffering and self-sacrificing. "I am the way," said Jesus, "the truth, and the life" (John 14; 6). What is a way but a method? What is a life but a progress according to a method? The Apostle, looking down that way, enjoined upon his followers to "walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5; 2). "For I rejoiced greatly," said John, "when the

brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth" (3 John 3); and again, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3; 18). To walk "in the truth" and to love "in the truth" must mean to pursue a certain method. Again, when the Christ says, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John 18; 37), he must refer to every one whose feelings, thoughts, and deeds accord with his own—to every one in active sympathy with his methods of life.

All such passages—and they might be multiplied greatly—show that, so far as the nature of abstract or religious truth can be judged by what the writers of Scripture believed to be its results, it is not identical with a formula; nor can it be communicated or possessed by one who apprehends it merely as this. A formula can be accepted by the intellect alone. It can be mastered, once for all, by a single act of memory; and can exert its full influence when obeyed solely according to the letter. Only as we may suppose that the truth is not in the letter but in the method, the principle, the spirit expressed through the letter, can we interpret intelligently such Scriptural passages as have been quoted. Only as we may suppose this can we understand why such effects should result as these passages claim. No truth except that which is supposed to be in methods rather than in statements can characteristically oblige a man to think in order to perceive it, and to work in order to accept it. Why but to



emphasize these latter effects of the truth and the importance of them are we told that the publican, who smites upon his breast and sighs out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," tho he may not have fulfilled many a requirement of a formal law, should be commended rather than the Pharisee, tho he may have left not one jot or tittle of this law unfulfilled? The publican yearns for higher conceptions and attainments. He lives according to true methods, and so has the truth. The Pharisee is content with what he possesses already. He does not live according to true methods. He does not have the truth (Luke 18; 10-14).

Let, then, the souls so often blamed because they look away from what they have, and search on every side of them for more, toil on! Their toil, tho it may gain them little to be touched or seen, may yet develop life in them. Each sigh may force still farther from their breasts the poisonous breath of error, each aspiration draw still nearer them the inspiring air of heaven. There is so much more truth on the earth than mortals can imagine possible! When Lessing said, "Did the Almighty, holding truth in his right hand and search for truth in his left hand, tender me the one that I should prefer, I should ask for the search for truth"; when Malebranche affirmed, "If I held truth a captive in my hand, I would let it fly that I might once more chase it, and capture it," they spoke far more the wisdom of the heart than of the head. The truth held in one's hand? The absolute, eternal



truth? Can it be handled—all of it? Is not often the effort of obtaining it, the method of discovering it, its most important factor? If this be so, it is through the desire for this truth, and not in any sating of the desire, that it can be possessed. This is the reason why—

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”

*In Memoriam: Tennyson.*

To the spirit, progress is more acceptable than a precept, life than a tale that is told. Through struggle men experience development, and doubt that leads to struggle is a means of grace. The moment of the Christ's intensest doubt came just before the greatest victory of his faith. The cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27; 46) was the minor prelude preceding the triumphant cadence, “It is finished” (John 19; 30).

Even the very infallible unchangeableness of which dogmatism sometimes boasts may be in itself a ground for grave suspicion. Is it the sign of a living thing to stand unmoved for centuries amid the shifting seasons of the world's advance?—to fix the gaze of greatest admiration on the past?—to find the holiest ideal there, and to long for the superior sanctity of that which has been buried? Did ever painter yet depict one faintest realization of a living faith in which the face was not turned toward the future? What is the influence that sways the individual or the community whose aim is sought amid the smoke of centuries consumed? Re-

member Lot's wife! There is a civilization beautiful to look upon which may be a monument of what? Of death—possibly of damnation. It is a question whether, without being crushed and killed, a living thing—and truth, according to the Scriptural representation, is surely this—can ever be confined for long in a single unchanged mould; whether a root having any life at all will not necessarily have enough of force to bend and crack and cast aside whatever urn of worldly manufacture may surround it. Has not every age had experience enough to be taught that previous ages held too firmly to the form, that changes in the form do not affect the substance of the truth? Why then should each new phase of truth be met with the same old folly of opposing it? Why should a theoretical misconception, as foolish as the child's that takes the mask for the man, cause all those mournful, yet quixotic, crusades that tend to persecution, if they do not end in martyrdom? In the world of nature, once at least in every year, the white snows melt upon the mountains; and the gleaming ice upon the streams is heaved up, rent apart, and swept away. Why, now and then, should not like changes be expected in the world of thought? Why should not men anticipate a breaking up and disappearing of formal aspects, however bright and beautiful, however appropriate and satisfactory they may have seemed in their own now long past season? But what men might expect and should expect, they will not; and when these changes come—

alas for such as base their confidence on forms alone! Like those that pitch their tents upon the shifting sands of a flooding stream, they find all things about them trembling, crackling, sinking; and in the sudden frenzy of bewilderment it often happens that the very voice most boastful of unwarranted credulity becomes most blatant of an equally unwarranted despair. "Truth is a form," says one. "Forms change. This fact is patent. Therefore truth must change. There can be no enduring ground of certainty; by consequence, no faith. At best, the truth consists alone in sincerity to personal conviction"—and, arguing thus, he ends by having no conviction. "Truth," says another, "is immutable and eternal; it can not change, and, therefore, forms should not. No change can be compatible with faith whose essence is submission to external standards. Accordingly the Church must hold to these implicitly, and, if it have occasion, must enforce them by the exercise of its authority"—and, arguing thus, he ends by exercising, as if in its behalf, his own authority alone. The first man goes astray because he has perceived an operation changing the formula, but, while perceiving this, has failed to recognize that in the method of the operation lies the truth; the second goes astray because he has observed a method, but has looked upon a single aspect of it as a mould to which all future aspects are to be conformed. He does not view it as only the outward and the transient phase of that which in its inward self alone is enduring.

But he who apprehends that truth involves conformity to a method of operation, and that *the* truth involves conformity to one eternal, absolute method, need not fall the prey of either of these errors. Merely because he perceives nothing but the changeable in formulæ, he need not imagine that there is no permanent truth at all exprest in them, nor that, by consequence, the truth which all men and the Bible exalt, and for which he himself is striving, consists in mere sincerity. Sincerity is truth to self—a true expression in outward speech and manner of the processes of thought, feeling, and volition experienced within. But a life in accordance with the truth, altho implying this, may include much more. It may include an expression, not alone in outward bearing, but in inward life as well—in processes of thought, feeling, or volition, whatever they may be—that accords with that which is understood by the term *the absolute*. So far alone as the laws of the absolute are “written upon one’s heart” is sincerity to self sufficient. But otherwise, if one’s inward life do not accord with methods of the universe, he may be true to himself and yet not be true to the methods operating through all time and in every place.

As shown on page 31, the Apostle to the Gentiles, in order to prove faith the attitude of soul acceptable to God, felt constrained to prove that this was that through which in every period of their history the Israelites had been saved.\* And is there any one who

\* Rom. 1; 17, quoting Hab. 2; 4. Rom. 4; 3, quoting Gen. 15; 6.

fails to recognize the force of an argument which shows the methods of one system of religious life to be not different, but similar to methods which have been recognized in part in every other system? However this may be, the truth of the Biblical religion—what is it except conformity to the methods of life equally apparent in the individual experience of religious men both before and after the coming of the Christ? The truth of natural religion—what is it but conformity to the methods equally apparent in the development of the soul and of the forms of physical life by which it is surrounded?

He who recognizes these conceptions can be a friend both to progress and to permanence. He can argue, on the one hand, that the forms of truth may change, and he can maintain, upon the other, that the methods working underneath these forms must remain the same. He can perceive the shifting of the scenery upon the stage of life without supposing that the stage itself is shifting. He can note the curtain falling without imagining that it is falling upon everything that he should treasure. He can cease to hear the murmurs of applause, and can watch the retiring of the audience, without surmising that all the joys in store for him are left behind. He knows that, tho he may no longer see the forms or listen to the words that represented to him once all that appeared to be the truth, this does not indicate that the truth itself does not exist. He knows that while forms do not and can not last forever, the

methods of operation whose phases they represent may and must endure; and that in them can endure that absolute verity to which all men, in exercising faith, acknowledge their allegiance.

To certain readers conceptions such as these may appear too vague and insecure. Their minds are finite, and they crave the definite; and not a few of them may wish to walk by knowledge, not by faith. Yet others are not so. To them the suggestions here presented will be welcome not alone, but stimulating. For so far as the absolute truth is conceived to be conformity to a single method operating everywhere, so far it will appear not speculative but logical to infer that for a man to know with thoroughness a single mind and a single world may be the same, in kind tho not in degree, as to know the mind of God and of all the universe; and this not in a pantheistic or materialistic sense, but in a spiritual sense, inasmuch as God reveals his character in each as well as in all; inasmuch as his laws are the laws of one whose wisdom is so absolute that his wise methods need no alteration.

To know one mind may be the same in kind as to know God! Is not this a conception almost radiant with suggestions? Was it not thus that Jesus, the man, could be for us the image of the invisible God, the expression of his character, and hence the truth? But the Christ was said to be an elder brother—the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8; 29). Had he—has he—brethren? Then others besides the Christ can



represent the Godhead. If so, when can they do this? It must be when they live according to the truth, and when also they feel impelled to express to us with truth the thoughts and feelings actuating them. But in what circumstances do they feel impelled to this? Is any mortal really frank except among his friends? Is he truthful save so far as he is loving? Perfect love alone casts out the fear that causes diffidence. It alone prompts one to surrender wilfulness to spontaneity. It alone enables him to dare to open all his heart to one who listens at his side. But ordinary men can live the truth only at intervals, or express it to only a single soul. The Christ is claimed to be the truth at all times and to every one. If this claim be justified, he must have loved all. In the words, "I am the truth," he gave the profoundest expression of this love. He could not have been the one save as he had the other. So to thoughtful minds the simplest fact of his history is equally significant with the Crucifixion to which the Church has chiefly called attention; only men are gross, and need the physical, material expression.

Yet again, it has been shown that truth is possest in the degree alone in which it is lived, experienced. The love, accordingly, which causes others to be frank is efficient in imparting truth to us in the degree alone in which it affects ourselves. Thus do the laws of the mind necessitate the methods of Christianity. Christ was the truth, but only those who are "of the truth hear" his "voice" (John 18; 37). Only those who do



the Father's will can "know of the doctrine" (John 7; 17). Our friend may open to our view the workings of his heart; but it is friendship, love, awakened in ourselves in view of that which he reveals, which measures our appreciation and appropriation of his experience. Not so much, then, the one that merely is loved knows of the godlike in a man, and hence of God; but "every one that loveth . . . knoweth God" (1 John 4; 7).

And who can say that he has never had a friendship, a merely human friendship too, in which there were experiences akin to this; from which there were emitted sanctifying influences like those which might accompany the revelations of a God? Those happy faces that still flit before us whenever we recall the fresher days of youth; those friends who met us in the years when our whole souls were yearning for the knowledge of the godlike; those who held to our ideals so bright a love that we could never keep our thoughts from it; those in the sunshine of whose smiles truth, that no longer felt the wintry influence of frigid frowns, broke into buds upon our lips and flowered all round them in our blushes—were they not the dearest messengers to teach our souls of God? "Every one that loveth . . . knoweth God." And was not this—the knowledge of God's self—the fond possession that made our blood so thrill in all our pulses, that made our souls so tremble as if in ecstasy to shake off the robes of matter, nay, that made this old earth here itself a heaven? If we knew God, indeed, what further blessing could ex-

istence furnish us? And would not all the blessedness of such a state be owing to a mood which friendship had developed in us? "Every one that loveth . . . knoweth God."

There certainly is comfort to an earnest mind in conceiving that the truth, with all its infinite essence, may be learned through knowledge of some single phase of it; that a single world may teach us of the universe, a single man, of God; that we may find, tho not in an exclusive sense, our heaven in our household, and our God himself in every friend—in the least of all his children who is hungry and is fed by us, and is thirsty and is given drink by us (Matt. 25; 35-40).

The range of truth, however, by considerations such as these, is simplified, not only in the realms of space, but also in the realms of time. The experiences of life are granted us that we may learn the truth through them. How long must life be ere we shall have learned it thoroughly? The insect that can flutter through its brief existence in a day can experience birth and growth and death as truly as the mastodon. A few words or a few deeds may reveal to us the character of a friend. Through them we may learn his methods of believing, feeling, doing; through them we may learn the truth concerning him. A few words from the book of revelation, a few evolutions in the works of nature—why may they not reveal to us, with equal certainty, the character of him who is the eternal, the infinite, and the absolute?

When the Christ declared that every one who was of the truth would hear his voice, whom did he mean to mention? Only souls that could speak wisely of a long experience? Only the men whose feeble feet had traveled through the whole hard path of life, whose limbs were tottering on the borders of a grave from which, perhaps, they shrank in fear of an offended Deity? Did he not mean the little children also, who, perhaps, could not articulate a sound, whose limbs were tottering too, but not from heaviness, and who shrank too, but not from that sweet face which had gazed upon them through harsh crowds that would have kept them back from him? The eternal, the infinite, and the absolute truth—think not that a mortal's share of it can be measured in the scales of time or of space. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (2 Pet. 3; 8). The soul of a little child that dies is riper than we think, perhaps. Some of the smallest in the graveyards may have lived the truth in a deeper sense than those whom men call great. Are any of us certain that it would have been worse for us had we died early? Is there not much promise in a promise of perpetual youth? Are not the cherub faces crowded on the canvas of the artist a vague prophecy of some superior joyousness and beauty in the children who go forth to live as children evermore within the realms of spirit? How is it with mortals when they linger longer here? Let withering lips and deathlike countenances tell. We have our good things—Heaven

forgive us that we call them good!—on earth. And is this wretched and distorted lie into which the earth has shaped so many of us, to speak and do and be ourselves forever? And if we be not satisfied with what this world can make of us, if we rebel against it, what comes then? To the Christ, who spake, and did, and was the truth, the world cried, “Crucify him! crucify him!” It is so with many still. For them to speak the truth is death to influence, to do the truth is death to position, and to be the truth—this is to complete the aim of life. It is to be sacrificed, to die, and to live in spirit only. Yet this fate may not be without its compensations. In the last address of the Christ to his disciples—the same in which he prophesied his coming Crucifixion—he also said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15; 11).

## CHAPTER III

### THE MIND'S SUSCEPTIBILITY TO SPIRITUAL OR INSPIRATIONAL, AS CONTRASTED WITH MATERIAL, INFLUENCES

To What Men Refer When Using the Term Inspiration—When Using the Term Spiritual—Considered an Influence Not Traceable to the Conscious Sphere of the Mind—But Traceable to or Through an Inner or Subconscious Sphere—Proofs of the Existence of This Sphere, as in Memory, Fright, Fever, Hypnotism—Subconscious Philosophical and Mathematical Intellection—Resulting from Previous Conscious Action, as in Skill—Not Resulting from Previous Conscious Action : Coburn, Mozart, Blind Tom—Subconscious Diagnosis of Disease at a Distance—Subconscious Apprehension of Distant Occurrences—Both in Space and Time—Mind-Reading—Automatic Writing—Apparitions—Connection Between Such Facts and Belief in a Future State of Rewards and Punishments—Often Attributed to Natural Material Causes—Should Be Attributed to Influences from Nature's Occult Side—Shown in Susceptibility of the Primitive, Uneducated Man to Such Influences—Instinct and Reason—Instinctive and Rational—Instinctive and Religious—Instinctive and Animal—Story of the Fall—The Mental Actions of Animals—Of Negroes, Indians, and Those Subject to Hallucinations, with Inferences Therefrom—Like Inferences with Reference to the Origin of Religion Drawn from Primitive Religious Customs—With Growth of Intelligence, Physical Occult Manifestations Are Considered Less Important Than Verbal—But the Verbal Continue to Be Associated with Subconscious Intellection.

We have been considering the nature of truth as determined by that which men show that they seek when searching for it, by that which they suppose themselves to find when obtaining it, and by that which they do when receiving or imparting its influence. The object of this volume is to inquire into the nature, not

only of truth in general, but of that particular department of it—already discust to some extent, but not fundamentally—which is termed the truth of inspiration. It becomes incumbent upon us now, therefore, in accordance with the purpose indicated on page 9, to gain a clear understanding, if we can, of what is meant by inspiration. The word itself may indicate in part an answer to this question. Those using and justifying the term believe in an inner as distinguished from an outer influence exerted upon the mind, and attributable to a spiritual source. They may acknowledge that a man may be inspired in connection with what he hears or sees, as by a patriotic song or a flag; but they do not acknowledge any necessary or inevitable connection between the external object and the effect. They point out that another man, standing by the side of the first, might be conscious of no inspiring influence; and also that vast numbers of those subject to this influence experience it irrespective of any appeal whatever to any of the senses; and the source of this appeal, because not necessitating, in order to make itself felt, any such material agency, is termed spiritual.

This term spiritual, as thus used, is very broad and varied in its meaning. But one fact may be said to be uniformly true of it. It always refers to an effect experienced within the mind, which effect, tho it may be an indirect result, is never a direct result of anything seen, heard, felt, smelt, or tasted in the external world. Some, however, conceive of the effect as not external



or material in the sense only of being mental—*i.e.*, as having been derived or developed in one's own mind. Others—and well-nigh all religionists—conceive of the effect as one produced, without the necessary intervention of the senses, by one mind upon another. They differ, however, when trying to determine what or whose mind it is that produces the effect. One holds that it is the mind of some person now living upon the earth; another, of some spirit that formerly lived upon the earth; another, of some intelligence of a different order from any that has ever lived upon the earth; and, finally, another, that it is the mind of the Deity. The first may be said to be, in the main, the view of the mere psychologist; the second, the view of the modern spiritist; the third, the view of some spiritists, and of many Christians, especially Catholics; and the fourth, the view of the majority of orthodox Protestants. The Bible, in mentioning the effects of the Apostles' preaching (Acts 17; 1-4), the reappearances of Moses and Elias (Matt. 17; 3), and the appearances of angels of God (Acts 27; 23), as well as of the Lord (Jer. 31; 3), and of God (2 Chron. 1; 7), seems to sanction all four views. Even this fact, however, tho acknowledged, does not reconcile the conservative Christian to spiritism. Because of the passage in Rev. 22; 18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book," which passage is taken to



refer not merely to the Book of the Revelation, but to the whole Scriptures, he maintains that all that can be rightly deemed inspired revelation has ceased. To account, however, for cases in which new doctrines have apparently been proclaimed, some Episcopalians and all Catholics hold that certain officials of the Church, individually, or assembled in lawful councils, are divinely guided to interpret the "truth once delivered" (Jude, 3); and are sometimes inspired to develop it even to the extent, in connection with councils of the Church, of giving it unforetokened meanings. This attributing of inspired authority to develop the truth is paralleled by a somewhat similar authority attributed by Mohammedans, Mormons, and New Churchmen to their respective religious leaders. It is worth while to notice also that even some who profess to believe that revelation is no longer imparted through inspiration, nevertheless seem inclined to judge the trustworthiness of those who interpret the traditional doctrines by tests suggesting a different opinion. Some Presbyterians have a subtle belief in the inspiration of the answer in the Westminster Catechism to the question, "What is God?" because this answer was originally composed of the first few unpremeditated words of a prayer that ended a discussion in which no one had been able to think out a satisfactory definition. It is doubtful whether there are not a large number of intelligent people who have in them a little of the same feeling that made the old Seventh-day-Baptist min-

isters, after reaching their pulpits, open their Bibles and take the first text to which a casual undirected finger would point. We have probably all heard of one of their sermons—on Cant. 2; 12. “The voice of the turtle is heard in our land”—“Brethren, you know the turtle ain’t got no voice. But on a summer evenin’, as you’re a-walkin’ a-nigh the pools, you hear the turtles a-droppin’ off the logs into the water. The voice of the turtle is the sound of a droppin’ into the water, the sound of a baptism, the sound of a joinin’ of the Church—that’s the sound of the good time comin’.” It must be owing, too, to some belief in present religious inspiration that, to-day, the most popular ideal of a distinctively religious teacher, to say nothing of a prophet, excludes anything supposed to call particular attention to his own conscious intellection, or even to his own intellect. He may possess, and add to his influence by possessing, accuracy of observation, breadth of information, and brilliancy of style, but it is felt that the value of his work does not depend mainly upon them. He is supposed to be guided to his utterance by a spiritual agency that works within him, and which can, occasionally, make the words of an ignorant fisherman or a weak child as enlightening and uplifting as those coming from the lips of the most learned scholar and skilful advocate.

Such facts as these are sufficient to indicate among religionists a belief in an inner or occult sphere of the mind which can be influenced in other ways than

through the senses. Let us notice now some of the proofs that may be adduced in order to confirm this belief. To begin with, all philosophers admit—tho they may explain differently—the existence of this occult mental sphere. Of its operations, a man is ordinarily unconscious; and of its results he can know so far only as they may influence another sphere of which he is ordinarily conscious. So different, in fact, are the operations in these two spheres, often engaged, as we shall find, in carrying on at the same time two different processes of thought (see page 62), that they have been termed—tho, of course, not with scientific exactness, as the reader will understand whenever suggestions of this are made hereafter—two minds, namely, the conscious and the subconscious, which latter term is used to indicate a mind of some of the results of which we are conscious, but of the processes of which we are unconscious. It is noteworthy, too, that, even in the physical frame, there are indications of duality in the mental constitution. Not only are there two separate lobes in the brain, each apparently containing a separate set of mental organs, but there are two systems of nerves connecting the brain with the rest of the body. It has not been proved that, of the two lobes in the brain, one is the seat of conscious and the other of subconscious action; but this has been proved of the two sets of nerves. Those of the cerebrospinal system, which move the hands, limbs, and the facial and vocal organs, are controlled by conscious action; those of

the sympathetic system, which move the circulatory and digestive organs, are controlled by subconscious action. To complete the correspondence, as preparatory to observing the way in which the conscious and the subconscious spheres often work conjointly, it is well to notice, also, that there are certain movements, like winking and breathing, which can be carried on both consciously and unconsciously.

In considering these two spheres of mental activity and the relations between them, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the sphere of which we are conscious. But it is important, for a proper realization of all the bearings upon religion of that which we are now discussing to develop, for a little, certain facts and inferences with reference to the subconscious sphere. The facts with which we are most familiar are afforded, perhaps, by memory. The mind is constantly recalling experiences of which it has been so thoroughly oblivious that they have been supposed to have been lost. But equally conclusive evidences of the same subconscious possibility may be furnished by other mental processes. When trains of thought are conducting to conclusions with the rapidity of lightning, what is the mind doing but making use of stores not only, but of methods that are not outside of it but in it, and yet are hidden so deeply in it as to be beyond the reach of any conscious control? In normal mental action we are only partly aware of the extent and importance of these stores, and may be startled to hear it stated that, probably,

nothing whatever that a man has ever seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelled, or, by the slightest practise, developed into the suggestion of a habit, is lost, but remains indelibly imprest upon the intellect and character. Nevertheless such seems to be the case. Captain Frederick Marryat, author of "The Adventures of a Naval Officer," relates that at one time he jumped into the sea to save a sailor's life, and, on rising, found himself in the midst of blood, giving evidence of the presence of a shark. Between that moment and the moment almost immediately following, when he was rescued, he reexperienced, according to his story, about everything that he had ever done or said or thought. Coleridge states, in his "Biographia Literaria," that in a German village near Göttingen a young woman, twenty-five years of age, who could neither read nor write, was seized with a fever. While in this state she kept constantly repeating Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Her physician, being of a scientific turn, traced back her history. He found that she had once been a servant in the house of a Protestant pastor. This man had been in the habit, while walking up and down in a passage into which the kitchen opened, of reading in a loud voice Latin, Greek, and rabbinical Hebrew. Many of the very phrases, which the physician had taken down in writing at her bedside, were found in the rabbinical books in this man's library.

Results analogous to these—occasioned, as will be noticed, in the one case by fright and in the other by

fever—may be produced by hypnotism. That hypnotism exists as a fact, no one informed with reference to the subject now thinks of denying. An influence that can enable a patient, without being conscious of pain, to have a tooth pulled or a limb amputated is a reality. An influence, not induced by another, but apparently self-induced by nervous excitement, which can cause our Southern negroes in revival meetings to fall down as if dead, and fail to feel pins vigorously stuck into them—a fact which many have confirmed—is a reality. This much being conceded to hypnotic influence, perhaps it should be added here, in preparation for several references that will be made to the subject hereafter, that there is every reason for supposing that the immediate effect of the condition, like that of fright and of fever, is physical rather than, as sometimes supposed, mental. It may be described as a method of putting the conscious body and, through it, the conscious sphere of the mind to sleep. When this has been done, that which is in subconsciousness may be made to wake up, and to take charge of the body's organs of expression. But there is no proof that hypnotism does any more than furnish an opportunity, availing itself of which the subconscious can exercise its influence in a way normal to itself, yet not ordinarily observed because hidden behind the activities of consciousness. The germs of thought from which the conceptions of the hypnotic patient are developed are often very elementary in character. Sub-



jects possessing no oratorical gifts, for instance, are told to personate some famous public speaker, and at once they set out, and, with apparent ease, deliver addresses closely resembling not only in method but in phraseology some speech of this man which they have previously heard or read, tho only in an extremely superficial and heedless way. The author himself knows of a reasonably authentic instance, being personally acquainted with all the parties concerned, in which—tho in the presence, indeed, of one familiar with the Italian language, which fact may have influenced the result—a man who knew nothing of this language, when hypnotized by another, who also knew nothing of it, was made to sing, with correct Italian words and pronunciation, a song which the subject had heard but once, and this years before.

This occult action of the mind, of which we are speaking, is not confined, however, to memory. If it were, its results could all be allied to the ordinary phenomena of recollection, of which it would merely be an unusual development. Similar action is evident in connection with logical and mathematical processes, and even with those involving skill, which would appear, at first thought, especially dependent upon conscious direction. Von Hartmann, in his "*Philosophy of the Unconscious*," as translated by W. C. Coupland, quotes this passage from Jessen's "*Psychology*": "When we reflect on anything with the whole force of our mind, we may fall into a state of entire unconscious-



ness, in which we not only forget the outer world, but also know nothing at all of ourselves and the thoughts passing within us. After a shorter or longer time, we then suddenly awake as from a dream, and usually at the same moment the result of our meditation appears clearly and distinctly in consciousness without our knowing how we have reached it. Also, in less severe meditation, there occur moments in which a perfect vacancy of thought is combined with a consciousness of our own mental effort, to which, in the next moment, a more vivid stream of thought succeeds. Certainly, some practise is required to combine serious reflection with simultaneous self-observation, as the endeavor to observe thoughts in their origin and their succession may easily produce disturbances of thinking and arrest the evolution of our thoughts. Repeated attempts, however, put us in a position clearly to perceive that, in fact, in every arduous reflection a constant ebb and flow of thoughts, as it were, takes place—a moment in which all thoughts disappear from consciousness, and only the consciousness of an inner mental strain remains, and a moment in which the thoughts stream in, in greater fulness, and distinctly emerge into consciousness. The lower the ebb, the stronger the succeeding flood is wont to be; the stronger the previous inner tension, the stronger and livelier the contents of the emerging thoughts.” Whether or not the reader has ever been able to detect these two processes in his own thinking, he may, at least, recognize

that others have done so; and it is in logical accordance with the inferences derived from the existence of both processes that certain scholars have maintained that by fixing their attention in the evening just before retiring for the night upon some subject—whether details to be committed to memory or problems to be solved—they could find their work very much furthered if not wholly completed, in the morning. It is said that the astronomer Kepler used to practise upon this theory.

The fact of the existence, side by side, of mental action both subconscious and conscious is much more easy to prove than most of us are aware. How often have we heard a friend unconsciously hum or even sing aloud in perfect time and tune a song, while his conscious energies were directed toward the accomplishment of a task entirely different in character! We are all more or less familiar, too, with the conditions under which a conscious action, or series of actions, may be made to become unconscious. Every one who has acquired skill in any department knows that it is a result of practise continued until the mind has become enabled to superintend a large number of details without having any of them clearly in consciousness. Every musician, for instance, is aware that after repeating a composition on the piano the execution may become so familiar that his fingers will play it automatically, as it were, while his thoughts are very intently fixt upon something else, possibly upon the general ex-

pression of the theme of the music, possibly upon something having nothing to do with this art in any form.

When the subconscious action of the mind takes place in connection with processes which a man has learned and mastered, we may always attribute it, as we do recollection, to previous conscious action. But there are cases in which previous conscious action has had nothing to do with the subconscious action. As illustrating what is meant, take first the cases of lightning calculators, as they are termed—many of them mere children, who have hardly mastered reading and writing, much less arithmetic. In a way apparently unknown to themselves, they are able to solve the most intricate mathematical problem almost as rapidly as it can be read to them. Zerah Coburn was but eight years old when exhibited before audiences of the foremost mathematicians of his time. Here, according to the English “Annual Register” of 1812, are two of the questions asked him, and answered before the numbers could be written down: “What is the square root of 106,929?” “What is the cube root of 268,336,125?” Or take, again, the cases of musicians able to execute apparently the most difficult compositions without having gone through any previous study or practise. Mozart was only three years old when he began to play in public concerts, and when only eight years old he had composed a symphony for a full orchestra. He was, however, the son of a musician, and his facility might be attributed to some extent to his surroundings

or to heredity. But neither of these reasons can in any way account for the performances of others. There is for instance, in our own country, Blind Tom, as he is called. He is an exceptionally ignorant negro, yet he can remember and execute, apparently, any composition that has been played but once before him; and on the spur of the moment, he can sometimes add to what he has heard "variations" as successful as the average of those resulting from long hours of labor on the part of educated musicians.

In these cases, the ultimate results of subconscious mentality are not essentially different from what might be expected if facility were acquired through practise directed by conscious effort. It is possible to conceive of thoroughly educated mathematicians and musicians who, after long experience, might produce effects exactly similar to those that have just been mentioned. We can only say of these latter effects that in them the subconscious facility was not acquired through conscious effort *as a fact*. But now, going a step farther, we shall find that there are cases in which it could not have been acquired thus *as a possibility*. We shall find that subconscious or occult action is sometimes influenced by conditions or occurrences with which the mind could not have become acquainted through the eyes or ears, or by any method through which one ordinarily obtains or develops knowledge or thought. The following is an illustration of such a case. Some years ago, Professor John W. Churchill, of Andover

Theological Seminary, gave the author permission to use the following story. In order to try an experiment, the professor said that he obtained the names and addresses of two persons in Boston, of whom he knew nothing, except that they were patients of a physician of his acquaintance. With these addresses in his possession, he called upon a certain Dr. Tucker, residing in Brooklyn, N. Y. This man, a graduate of the Harvard Medical School, claimed to have discovered in himself, soon after beginning to practise, a peculiar supernormal gift. The professor wished to test it. "Can you prescribe," he asked, "for a person now in Boston?" "I think so," said the doctor. "Have you his address?" The professor read one of the addresses that he had brought. "I will go," said the doctor, "and see the patient." Then, placing his hand on his brow, he began to talk something like this: "Number —, Blank Street. Yes, I see—red brick house—two stories—bay window on the first floor. I enter—a winding stairway. The patient is in the second-story front room—a lady—blonde—blue eyes—rather stout—about thirty-five years old—is troubled," etc., describing her symptoms and ending with a diagnosis and prescription. After attending to this patient, the physician went through a similar process with reference to the other. Professor Churchill handed a copy of what had been said, as taken down by the Brooklyn physician's stenographer, to the physician in Boston. "Everything here," said this physician,

“is as accurate as it would be if the one who dictated it had come here by rail, visited the houses, and heard the patients describe their own symptoms.” In olden times—possibly in some places in our own time—a physician whose mind could act in this way would be considered to be under the influence of divine inspiration. But it can be shown that Dr. Tucker was not so. The ability to work “signs and wonders” of this kind does not necessarily guarantee the truth of the words uttered by the workers of them. The author knows of at least one patient—a son of the Rev. Dr. J. M. Ludlow, of Orange, N. J.—with reference to whom the occult diagnosis of this physician, tho agreeing with that of other eminent physicians consulted, was shown by a post-mortem examination to have been unmistakably erroneous. Yet a previous description, supernormally given, of the symptoms and appearance of the patient had been as accurate as in the cases mentioned above.

In these cases the mind seems to have been able to control the course of its occult activity, and to examine symptoms, and to exercise judgment, when as far from its own body as Boston is from Brooklyn. Here is another case in which no such control was exercised. Yet the conditions at a distance were just as accurately perceived. Notice, too, how thoroughly the circumstances justify such a use as is made in “Macbeth” of the appearance of Banquo’s ghost. The story was related to the author by an eye-witness, General Kargé,



a successful officer in our war of secession, and, for about twenty years, a professor in Princeton College. He presented the story as one of other reasons leading to his giving up certain wholly materialistic views of life, into which he had fallen in early manhood. He said that during the war of secession, while recruiting in New York City, he was on Fourteenth Street, opposite the Academy of Music, taking supper in the rooms of an Austrian military engineer who also was in the service of our government. This Austrian had a son, a graduate of the military school of Hanover, Germany, who, some months before this, with his father's connivance, had eloped from that place with the daughter of a Jewish banker, whose consent to her marriage could not be obtained. According to Jewish customs, the banker, after his daughter's flight, had gone through a ceremony in his synagogue excommunicating and anathematizing her for marrying against his will and outside her race. Very naturally this ceremony had had a serious effect upon the daughter's mind. At the time of the occurrence about to be related, the Jewess was presiding at the table at which the engineer and the general were seated, her husband being absent. Suddenly, her hand, which happened to be holding a cup of tea, and her whole frame began to quiver; then, with a frightened look upon her face, she shrieked out in German, "My father is dead! My father is dead!" and fell senseless to the floor. A physician was summoned, but the lady, tho partially restored physically, did not,

for a long time at least, recover her reason. Soon after the physician had arrived, the Austrian engineer and the general, in talking over the circumstances, decided to take down the exact time of the day. They did so, and three weeks later—telegraphic communication between Europe and America had not then been established—they received information that the banker had died in Germany at virtually the same hour at which the events just described had taken place in New York.

Exactly what was the form assumed by the impressions conveyed to this Jewess the general never ascertained. It never was feasible to do so, owing to her mental condition. But that sometimes in such cases persons are seen, and at other times words are heard, seems abundantly proved. Certain reports made to the English Society of Psychical Research, published by Meyers & Gurney in a volume entitled "*Phantasms of the Living*," contain accounts of something like six hundred experiences of the same general character, all occurring in our own times, and confirmed by the testimony of at least two persons. Many of these persons, too, who all give their names and addresses, are widely known. One remarkable feature of such occurrences is that, in an occult way, they make known not only that which is distant in space, but sometimes also future in time, nothing, perhaps, being better authenticated than the experience which certain persons have of premonitions. Nor is there much

reason to doubt that, in rare cases, the remote future\* even is foreseen with an accuracy of detail as perfect

\*When studying this subject, several years ago, the author used to hear a large number of predictions, but the conclusion reached by him was that in no circumstances was it worth while to anticipate either trouble or success on the supposition that the predictions might be fulfilled. Almost all of them were proved to be mere fabrications of fraud or fancy. But now and then, with just sufficient frequency to throw doubt upon the result's being due to mere coincidence, such a prediction would be fulfilled, and with marvelous accuracy. For instance, an English psychometrist consulted without premeditation because of a sign seen on a door—a man who, as a psychometrist (see note on page 160), might, of course, have merely perceived distant property occultly, and, as any man might upon seeing it normally, have made a guess with reference to its prospective value—described a house, of the existence of which the author was conscious of knowing nothing. The house was said to be a thousand miles or so away from where they were, and in a certain State where the author had never spent more than a week, the name of which State was given. The house was described so that its identity and surroundings could be recognized. It was stated that, on account of visiting a place in sight of this house, the author would obtain a sufficient sum of money to become independent. Two years later, he found himself in the State indicated, face to face with just such a house, and, because of being there, a difference of opinion arose with reference to property which he partly owned. This difference led to his accepting an offer to divide the property, and in less than a year, tho no part of that which went to others had increased in value, his had increased tenfold. It seems important to add, in order to show the method in which such prophecies—if they be prophecies—are usually fulfilled, that the statement heard two years before had made no impression upon him, and would probably have been forgotten had it not been written down in a note-book. Nor was it the influence of the prediction that had brought about the result, this being owing to wholly unexpected and unsolicited offers made and urged upon his acceptance by others. Such facts seem to indicate that, possibly, our conceptions, not only of space, but of time, are due to material limitations, and that the mind, so far as it can act outside of these, can occasionally look forward as readily as sideward. At any rate, there seems to be a sense in which every man has his own destiny rolled up within him; and in rare instances, as applied to rare occurrences, it may be supernormally unrolled. Notice, for instance, the following, told by an exceptionally trustworthy person, a friend of the author: This friend, while on a visit to an uncle who was a physician, accompanied this uncle when calling upon a patient suffering from a nervous disorder. The patient, a complete stranger from a distant city, almost before being introduced, turned upon the physician's companion, who, as it happened, was to be married in a few days, and said: "You will not marry the person to whom you are engaged. But do not regret it. You will marry happily this person's most intimate friend." The prediction was fulfilled in all regards, the intended wedding being first postponed and then prevented by the parents of the engaged parties, owing to a disagreement because the family of the one was Protestant and the family of the other was not.

as could be afforded to an eye-witness. All of us have read of reasonably authenticated prophecies that have been made to men and women who have subsequently had exceptional careers; and these have been by no means confined to those living in prehistoric periods. Take, for instance, the prophecies of their careers said to have been made to Marie Antoinette and the Empress Josephine, or by the Indian Kanawa of George Washington in his early life: "He can not die in battle. The Great Spirit protects that man and guides his destinies. He will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire." Or take Abraham Lincoln's dream about a ship, as told by him on the day on which he was assassinated, and which, as he then said, he had dreamed several times on the night preceding some trying event in the history of the nation. Another characteristic of this inner or occult mentality needs to be noticed. It can not only transcend the limitations of matter, and see or hear things at a distance in space or in time, but without the exercise of any power that, in the slightest degree, resembles sight or hearing, it can cause consciousness to become cognizant of the thoughts and feelings, both conscious and subconscious, that are at work in the minds of others. We have an example of this in ordinary mind-reading, in which one person, or a number of persons, will think of some action, and a third person, not told what the action is, will perform it. Frequently, however, a proficient mind-reader, instead of being in-

fluenced by the conscious thoughts of others, is influenced by their subconscious thoughts. He will speak of scenes and events entirely forgotten by them and buried in memory, but which, when thus unexpectedly recalled, are recognized as being detailed with accuracy. Undoubtedly many of the phenomena of modern spiritism are of this nature. The medium, possibly because thrown by his visitors into a fully or partially hypnotic condition, recalls facts which are stored in their subconscious memories. This explanation would account both for the accuracy of the deliverances and for their apparent strangeness. "I was not thinking at all of this subject," says the visitor, "and was told so-and-so about it." Indeed, the writer, in experimenting once with an extremely successful mind-reader, found that this man had the most success in reading certain words written by another and kept concealed when the one who wrote them did not concentrate his thought upon them, but, in a general way, thought of something else.

Connected with this ability of the mind, through its subconscious powers, to receive communications from outside itself are some very interesting developments. The Rev. William Stanton Moses states that while his hand was automatically writing his "Psychography," he spent his time in reading Plato. It is frequently supposed that such statements are due to self-deception or falsehood, and that all automatic writing on the part of "spiritist mediums" is fraudulent. In some



cases this may be so (see page 101). But in other cases it is not. The author is well acquainted with a Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity, in exceptionally good standing, who himself, with other members of his family, practised automatic writing, till the results became so inexplicably accurate as literally to frighten them and they desisted. The author is acquainted with another person into whose mind come the words of essays concerning subjects of which, sometimes, the person writing them knows nothing when the essays begin. The sentences in these essays are involved, and their meanings difficult to determine. But after being written down, the one whose hand has transcribed them studies them, exactly as one would an early English text, and then translates them into plain English, and publishes them—usually in religious weeklies. This person is a spiritist, the reader may think. Not at all; but, at the time when these things were told, had never attended a spiritist séance, and was strongly opposed to any one's doing it. Then an untrustworthy enthusiast, the reader may think. Not at all, again; but was the president of a society with ramifications all over the country, among the officers and members of which were clergymen and others whose names were household words in exceptionally conservative Christian denominations.

Indeed, any of us who may succeed in gaining the confidence of those about us will be amazed to find how many have had individual experiences of such a nature



as to confirm the general trustworthiness of all the statements that have been made here with reference to the occult action of the mind. "You knew my son," said Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, to Dr. J. S. Shipman, rector of Christ's Church, New York, who repeated the words to the author, "the night that he died, a thousand miles away from home, he came back, and we saw him." After making every allowance possible for mistakes in judgment, for mere hallucinations, and for coincidences, there remains a mass of evidence by rejecting which a man shows more credulity with reference to material limitations than he could show with reference to immaterial possibilities by accepting.\*

The supposed apparition mentioned in the preceding paragraph suggests what, for our purposes, is perhaps as important as any consideration connected with this subject. A few years ago, it was quite common in our country to hear clergymen and others ascribe that belief fundamental to all religions—the belief in the existence of the soul after death—to the revelations recorded in the Christian Scriptures. One can not easily account for such a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of facts. Every observant traveler or

\*An exhaustive enumeration and description of treatises dealing with the occult will be found in the Bibliographical Index of "Demon Possessions and Allied Themes," written by J. L. Nevius, D.D., for forty years a Presbyterian missionary to the Chinese, and published by the Fleming H. Revell Company, of Chicago, 1894. Few are aware how thoroughly and scientifically this whole subject has been studied, or how extensive and valuable is the literature that treats of it. Dr. Nevius, it may be said, acknowledges communications from spirits; but, apparently, from evil spirits only, dividing into good and evil those whom the modern spiritist would divide into the more or less "developed."

historian knows that this belief is practically universal, as proved not only by that which is usually taught, but by such practises as the placing with the dead of their weapons and clothing, as among the aboriginal Americans, Australians, and Africans; or the worshipping of the dead; and, at stated seasons, scores of years after their burial, the spreading of tables before their graves, as among the Japanese and Chinese; as well as by what is indicated upon the monuments, or is taken for granted in the literature of ancient Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Indeed, it is simply a fact that among the people of Asia to-day there are more customs and ceremonies suggesting a belief in a life after death than there are among the Christians of Europe and America; and there are more references to such a life in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome than in that of Judea. Every schoolboy who has studied classic mythology can recall descriptions of Elyseum and Hades in the writings of the former peoples; but our most learned commentators have failed to find more than a very few references to any such belief throughout the entire Old Testament. Nor among non-Christian people is there any failure to believe in future states of rewards and punishments. These also are described, or taken for granted, by the classic writers, and are just as thoroughly taught by the Buddhists and other religionists of the Orient as by ourselves.

Now, how did such beliefs originate? The theory

held in our country a few years ago attributed them, except among the Hebrews, to the imagination. It was said that they were gradually developed in human experience, at times when it was affected by such results as the rustling of trees in dark woods, or the dashing of waves on lonely shores—results arousing the mind to superstition, while they worked upon the sources of apprehension and conscience. Even more specific beliefs with reference to the personality of the gods, and their relations to men, were supposed to be derived through natural methods of development—some of them, for instance, through the same methods as those causing the formation of language. Take, for example, such an argument as this: When men had no word for the sun, they would naturally call it the father of the day, or—for a similar reason—call the earth a mother; and owing to this usage of words they would, after a time, come to associate real fatherhood with the one, or motherhood with the other, and finally to imagine each to have a personality, and thus to worship the sun or the earth as a god. Max Müller, in the fourth of his lectures on “The Science of Religion,” gives a modification of this view, tho still attributing the origin of religion to imagination. He says that when the primitive man, feeling his incompleteness and need of dependence, and wanting something like a father in heaven, chose the name *sky* to express his conception of it, he “did not mean . . . that the visible sky was all he wanted. . . . But when

that name had to be used with the young and the aged, with silly children and doting grandmothers, it was impossible to preserve it from being misunderstood. The first step downward would be to look upon the sky as the abode of that being which was called by the same name. . . . Lastly, many things that were true of the visible sky would be told of its divine namesake, and legends would spring up destroying every trace of the deity that once was hidden beneath that ambiguous name."

There is undoubtedly much truth in what is thus expressed, so far as it may be supposed to apply to the development of religious conceptions. But it does not explain the origin of the germ from which these conceptions were developed. Such statements fail to penetrate to the source, they fail to go to the bottom of the subject. They fail to show us why winds, waves, or skies, in combination with darkness, loneliness, or weakness, should cause a man to associate noise, force, or height with the influence of spirits; or to show us why particular uses of language or applications of it to things on earth or in heaven should suggest this influence. We attribute certain noises in our houses to the shutting of a door, to the draft of a furnace, or to the gnawing of mice. But why do we do this? Because we have had experience, or others have had experience of which they have told us, of similar noises that could be traced to these sources. This is that which occasions and justifies our inferences. Just so,

experiences of his own or of others like the one related on page 73 would justify superstitious inferences on the part of the primitive man. But nothing else would. If the man had never had such experiences, or heard of them, he might attribute certain sounds to birds or to animals, but he would not think of attributing them to spirits. Take into a forest one who has never been told that there are ghosts, and you will have a hard time convincing him that any of the noises about him are produced by a being impossible to see. Only, therefore, as we consider the possibility of the mind's being actually influenced at certain times from the hidden or occult in nature do we seem to have a thoroughly satisfactory reason for the prevalence of superstitious beliefs.

That this is the true reason appears probable, moreover, in view of the fact that any consciousness whatever of being influenced through subconscious mentality is more likely to be experienced by a primitive, uneducated man than by an educated one. Education gives one control over his mental resources. It causes him to understand himself, as we say, or to be conscious of himself. This control, once established as a habit, inclines him to hold in check the promptings of the subconscious, so that its effects shall manifest themselves either not at all, or only indirectly, by coalescing with those of which he is conscious. When this is the condition, the suggestions and imaginings due to subconscious intellection can not easily be distinguished

from the results of conscious intellection. The educated man, looking at his subconscious nature, as he does, through a glass darkly, always seems to see the texture of the material veil hanging in front of it. With the uneducated man, however, it is different. Influences exerted through the subconscious often appeal to him directly. Indeed, there are reasons for believing that when we go lower than the uneducated man we find these influences appealing even to the animal. There are reasons for believing that they are allied to all manifestations of intelligence which, in the absence of a predominating mental control, such as has just been said to characterize the educated man, we attribute to instinct.

Mr. Henry R. Marshall, in his "Instinct and Reason," defines instinct, which, in another place, he shows to be largely hereditary, as "the force within us which tends to make us act under certain conditions as all others who are of the same type—which leads us to undertake typical reactions." *Instinct*, for instance, makes us, without conscious thought, ward off with our hand a stone that seems moving toward our head. *Reason*, he defines as "the force which tends to make us vary from such typical reactions," as, for instance, not to ward off the stone when we have learned that it is fastened to a string and can not reach our head. From this conception it seems logical to associate the action of instinct with any mental manifestation which is not the result of reason. But the range of mental action



which is not the result of *conscious* reason is exceedingly large. There is occult or subconscious mental action, which seems to correspond both to that which is due to instinct, as in the case of conscience, and also to that which is due to a certain amount of reasoning, as in cases of lightning calculators and automatic writers. At the same time all that we can not *consciously* attribute to reason, whether it be due to instinct because hereditary, or to automatic physical or mental action because acquired by practise, or to subconscious reason acting behind all instinctive movements, as some suppose it to act behind the movements of the lower animals—all this we may call, because, as distinguished from rational, it seems to be such, *instinctive*—a word which differs from *instinct* in being an adjective signifying an effect which has the quality or appearance of that which results from instinct.

In the volume written by the author entitled, "The Representative Significance of Form," it was maintained that to the predominance of the *instinctive*, by which is meant spontaneous and unpremeditated mental action, like that of conscience or of aspiration—we are mainly indebted for our conceptions of those laws of being and becoming which give expression to the methods of the Creative Spirit, and which constitute what men term religious truth; that to the predominance of the *reasoning* or *conscious* action of the mind we are mainly indebted for scientific truth; while to the very nearly harmonious or equal blending of both

*instinctive* and *reasoning*, of both subconscious and conscious, mental action we are mainly indebted for artistic truth.

But why should this be? Especially why should the instinctive tendency be allied to religion?—Why but because it is this which rules in external nature, and therefore represents the Creative disposition and design? Is it necessary to suppose that this conception, which is exprest by many of the wisest and best, is merely a fabrication of fancy, having no foundation in fact? Does Wordsworth mean nothing when he says?—

I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

*Lines Compos'd a few Miles above Tintern Abbey.*

Or Matthew Arnold, when he makes a more definite reference to the same thought?—

“Ah, once more,” I cried, “ye stars, ye waters,  
On my heart your mighty charm renew ;  
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,  
Feel my soul becoming vast like you.”

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,  
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,  
In the rustling night-air, came the answer :  
“Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.”

*Self-Dependence.*

Why should not that which rules in inanimate nature rule also in animate nature? And tho we know that it does not rule in a man, except so far as he consciously allows it to rule, why should we suppose that this conscious action is, in anything like the same degree, necessary on the part of the animal. None of us ordinarily conceive of an animal as sinning. Why is this—even among those foremost to conceive of a man as sinning? Why, but because we do not conceive of an animal as consciously violating the laws of his being—as consciously doing otherwise than according to the promptings of his instinctive or subconscious nature?\*

But we all know that a man can do, and often does do, exactly the opposite of that indicated by such promptings. He does this because of his higher human possibilities, because of the preponderating and often counteracting influence that can be exerted by his conscious and reflective powers as influenced by his physical surroundings.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
He sees it in his joy ;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended ;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

*Ode on Intimations of Immortality: Wordsworth.*

\*Possibly it is to the subtle recognition of this fact that we can attribute the worship of animals, or the sacredness with which they are, or have been, regarded among different people.

It is sometimes represented that the story of the fall in the third chapter of Genesis can not be made to accord with the theory of development—much less with that of evolution. But it might be argued with some truth that it is exactly the kind of story that can be made to accord with this theory. What but a mental condition very close to that of an animal could be characterized by a lack of “knowledge of good and evil,” or a lack of experience of temptation coming from without—from the lower physical side of life as represented in the serpent—and conflicting with the promptings coming from within? Only an animal can be true to every condition of his being, and obey these latter promptings only, and these *unconsciously*. A man, to be true to every condition of his being, must obey them indeed, but consciously and calculatingly, and in such a way as to make them conform to the good as contrasted with the evil of which the play of cause and effect in the outward material world has taught him. Very important reasons for holding this conception of that which a man should do will be given hereafter. At present our business is to make sure of the facts on which the conception is based.

It has been said that there are grounds for supposing that the animals are influenced through methods corresponding to those according to which men are influenced through the subconscious or inner sphere of the mind. That this is so may be made to appear while we notice how the animals may be supposed to

communicate with one another. Of course they are obliged to communicate without formulating thought in words or gestures, because they have neither articulating organs nor hands. But, tho incapable of formulating thought, are they incapable of having it? If so, why does a dog wag his tail and ears and growl in his sleep? Is he not dreaming? But if he can dream, he must be capable of processes of thought. Yet how can he have processes of thought, without using words or gestures? How but precisely as a man can—by seeing in imagination series of pictures? A man when hungry thinks not only of the word *hungry*, but he has a vision of something that can be eaten. If he wish to tell another what his feeling is, he may use the word *hungry*; and this other also, if understanding the word, will have a somewhat similar vision. But notice that the essential, indispensable factor is not the word, but the vision that is caused in the listener's mind. The word is convenient, and, if a feeling be at all complex, it is extremely important, in order to convey distinctness and discrimination of meaning. But the essential thing is to cause the vision. Now a dog certainly remembers what he has seen. If so, he can probably recall it, but to recall it, he must have a vision of it. If he himself have a vision of it, ability to transmit conceptions in an occult way may enable him to convey a similar vision to another dog's brain. Is it possible that this is the way in which animals communicate? Why is it not? Any one who will have the patience

to watch them will notice that they often communicate without making a single sound or movement. Who has never seen two dogs or birds, at some distance from each other, start at exactly the same moment for the same place? Moreover, there is evidence that they are often influenced by men in this occult way. How is it that a snake is charmed, or a horse broken—or guided, for that matter? The next time that the reader is riding a horse, and comes to four corners, let him try to turn him in the direction chosen without using the reins—*i.e.*, by merely thinking. This can sometimes be done. A dog belonging to an acquaintance of the author was in the habit of bounding up into a bedroom every morning, and drinking water poured out from a pail that had been standing there overnight. One day, there was a discussion in this dog's presence with reference to the unhealthiness of drinking-water that had been uncovered for as many hours as this. From that time, no effort could get him to continue his former morning practise. It is hardly conceivable that he should have understood the subtle distinctions of words, and the bearings of the discussion, as men would have done. But it is conceivable that he should have been influenced by the concentration of the thoughts of the family, with or without the indication of the fact in their countenances,\* upon this

\*Animals are, undoubtedly, keen readers of the countenance; yet, in order to explain all cases, it seems necessary, in connection with this, to suppose them to be tamed, trained, and casually influenced according to methods more or less resembling those employed in hypnotism.



particular water as something that one should not drink. Nor, apparently, can an animal be influenced by the thought of one who is merely near at hand. Dr. C. N. Pierce, of Philadelphia, once told the author of a dog whose master frequently goes to Europe. But the moment the steamer bearing the master home reaches New York, his family, living sixty miles away, are made acquainted with the fact by the movements of this dog. The intellection in this case seems to be exactly similar to that of an old negress once known by the author. She would now and then announce by name to her mistress the coming arrival of a guest, who would reach the house from one to five hours later. This faculty of the negress, which could be paralleled by many other illustrations of the mind's being influenced from the occult side, perhaps even by that instinct which keeps the Indian from being lost amid dense, untrodden forests, manifests itself among members of the colored race in other ways. It is well known by Southern clergymen that, almost invariably, in describing their conversions, these people tell of perceiving figures and scenes which they take to be supernatural; and in such language that it seems scarcely possible to suppose the effects to be merely such as white men attribute to the imagination. Similar visions, too, if not common in this day among the Indians, were, at one time, supposed by some tribes to be necessary to the formation of character. In northern Michigan, the young men, before being permitted

the full prerogatives of manhood, were sent into the woods, and made to rest in hammocks swung among the trees, and to fast—the identical method pursued by Swedenborg—until they had had more or less of what in our day would be termed psychic experience. Of course, it is possible that every experience of this sort may be a mere hallucination, in the sense in which people generally, and not philosophers, use this term—*i.e.*, a result of imagination wrought upon by an abnormal, if not a diseased, condition of the physical nerves. But what of that? It does not lessen the force of the argument begun on page 74, which argument this explanation of the connection between the instinctive and the religious has been introduced in order to render more intelligible. The argument is that such experiences come to certain persons now, and have come to others in the past; and that they are now, and have been, attributed to causes that are not material, normal, or natural, but supposedly the opposite—spiritual, supernormal, or supernatural; and that this fact, especially in view of the far greater number of psychic experiences among the primitive, uneducated people who may be supposed to be nearest to the animal in their nature sufficiently accounts for the origin of primitive beliefs in the supernatural, or—what is the same thing—for primitive religion.

Primitive religious customs, too, strengthen this general argument. Among the aborigines of America, Africa, and Australia, who, in historic times at least,

have had no chance to imitate one another, there are two distinct forms in which spiritual communications are supposed to be imparted through the seer, or medicine-man, whatever he may be called. According to one form, this man goes into a dark place—sometimes a hut entirely shut in by poles—and those who consult him are said to hear utterances, and, less frequently, to see living figures emerging which are different from his own. According to the other form, while visible to all, he seems to be taken possession of by some influence that often makes him numb to physical sensation, and that always makes him talk or act in a manner apparently foreign to his own character.\* The

\*It is well known that, in our own time and country, there are conditions resembling this, into which certain persons fall, owing to their temperament or state of health, or to some hypnotic influence, as we may term it, consciously or unconsciously exerted upon them by others. In these conditions the body, while apparently put to sleep, seems to be made the direct instrument of the subconscious—either of the subject himself, according to the hypnotic theory, or of one obsessing it, if we accept the trance-theory. The result is that, while in this condition, these persons sometimes manifest a degree of mental culture and force of which in their conscious moods they give no indications.

A telegram from San Francisco, published in most of the newspapers of January 21, 1897, contained the following: "A shock-headed boy of fifteen, whose school days have been limited to three short years, and whose life has been passed chiefly in a little country town in Washington, delivered a lecture here last night upon the 'Different Religious Systems of the World, Now and in the Past.' Charles Anderson is the boy's name. He was born in Cowlitz County, in 1882, and lived there until two months ago. When lecturing, the boy's language and manners seemed to belong to some gray-haired old patriarch, and many of his hearers pronounced the discourse a deep and learned dissertation. And yet his conversation reveals a woful lack of education and he can scarcely read. Charles says he has been able to produce his condition at will, and tho unable to foretell his subject, he is able to remember a little of his discourse after the trance, but not enough to render him any more intelligent in his every-day life."

The author himself has heard from the lips of a woman, apparently incapable even of understanding the subject discuss, what was virtually—tho never purporting to be it, nor recognized to be it, so far as he knows, by any one but himself—the whole system of ancient Gnosticism, together with the

Assyrians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans seem to have given a ceremonial development to these primitive methods of receiving supposed spiritual communications. Most of the Egyptian temples contained rooms absolutely dark; and one of the Assyrian séances is probably described with accuracy in the account in the twenty-eighth chapter of 1 Samuel of the appearance to Samuel for Saul in the cave of the Witch of Endor. Many references are made by the classic writers to the mysteries, especially the Eleusinian, as solving questions with reference to the future. Were

main propositions of the Platonic germ which this seems to have developed—all presented with a wealth of illustration, information, and eloquence which he does not hesitate to say that he has never heard equaled by any unpremeditated effort on the part of any mind working normally. That the whole discussion was foreign to the woman's natural ability, range of thought, and, apparently, belief, was proved by conversations with her when in her normal moods; and that what was said in the abnormal moods was unpremeditated was proved by frequent questions that guided the course of her presentation, in which never, on different occasions, was the same phraseology or method of illustration exactly repeated. However, what was said in this way—tho it was all upon an elevated plane—was not taken by the author for indisputable truth. Why not? Partly because it was impossible for any one to determine its source. It might have come from an hypnotic reading of that which was stored unconsciously in the mind of the investigator, tho this seemed improbable, inasmuch as analogous deliverances of the same general tenor were made in his absence. It might have come from that which was stored in the subconsciousness of the woman herself, tho this, too, seemed improbable, inasmuch as she would scarcely have been interested sufficiently in such lines of thought even to have read of them. It might have come from that which had been stored in the conscious or subconscious mentality of some of her ancestors, or of some living person at a distance, or even been subconsciously read from some book. Or it might have come, as the woman herself supposed, from some spirit; yet, even so, this spirit might have been—to say the least—insufficiently informed to warrant confidence in the truth of the things uttered. Only two satisfactory conclusions could be drawn from the circumstances. First, the same as that which will be argued on pages 162 to 168, namely, that whatever may be uttered in this supernatural way must be judged precisely as it would be if uttered in a normal way—that is, by its conformity to previous information, and to the results of intuitive insight and logical inference. The other conclusion reached was this: that here, presented to eyes and ears, in the nineteenth century, was something that legitimately suggested the origin not only of Platonism and Gnosticism,

they a continuation of the dark séances of the African woods and the Egyptian temples?—or were they a ritualistic or representative recalling of these? As for the actions in the open daylight of those supposed to be possessed by a spirit, it is hardly necessary to point out that these must have been very similar to the actions of the Indian fakirs, and of the Mohammedan dervishes, while all of the methods indicated are apparently repeated in modern spiritism.

Now, let us notice another important fact. It is this: in the degree in which, among any adherents of a religion of this kind the intellect becomes developed,

but of much of that imaginatively weird cosmogony which has ordinarily been attributed to merely the Oriental imagination, and even, too, the origin of Polytheism as developed among such civilized people as the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. These ancient people had minds as intellectual and logical as our own; and one may be sure that they had some good reasons for their beliefs. (See Pliny's rational discussion of specters in his letter to Sura, B. 7; 27.) Almost all commentators agree that the words of Paul in Col. 2; 18, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen," refer to Gnosticism, and to angel-worship in it. Why, therefore, has not one come upon the original thing who—in connection with psychical phenomena and physical transformations which, if related, would not be credited by any one who had not seen something similar—has heard this system taught at regular intervals to people, some of them of decided intelligence, who believed themselves to be in the presence of a very superior spirit? Even supposing these people to have been completely deluded, why could not others, in similar circumstances, have been similarly deluded in ancient times? And if so, notice the inference not only with reference to Gnosticism but to Polytheism: how long would it have been before this superior spirit would have had followers; and after the "medium" through whom the utterances were received had passed away, how long would it have been before these followers would have conveyed to others, with all the suggestions with which imagination would **naturally** augment the original facts, a traditional belief in this spirit that had once talked to them? And what would a belief in this superior spirit and its teachings be but a belief in what the Greeks meant by the term god—not the Supreme Being, but a superior being, the existence of whom might or might not (from some of the literature of the Greeks we may judge that it did not) interfere with their acknowledging One supreme being? Does not this line of thought present a far more natural and justifiable theory through which to account for Polytheism than is usually advocated?



they come to pay less heed to mere physical phenomena—*i.e.*, to abnormal sights and sounds, contortions of the body, mysterious rappings, or workings of “wonders”—than to verbal communications, sometimes accompanying and sometimes not accompanying these, which communications, because verbal, appeal more exclusively to the intellect. Is not this exactly what we should expect? A man, according to the degree of his mental development, demands particulars. He is not satisfied with such general conceptions concerning the existence of life beyond the visible as alone can be suggested through physical phenomena. He craves to hear everything described in words. He desires to understand, and, for this reason, to have a religion that will appeal with the authority not only of subconscious but of conscious mentality—in fact, with the authority of the whole rational being. Accordingly, in Greece and Rome we find religious truth attributed mainly to the utterances of oracles and Sibyls; and in India and Eastern Asia, as well as among the Hebrews, Mohammedans, and Christians, attributed to sacred writings.

It must be borne in mind, however, that even these writings are generally supposed to involve an exercise of subconscious intellection. Their authors have been almost universally represented as subject to influences exerted through the subconscious mind in other ways. As we all know, this is claimed to have been true of many of the writers of the Christian Scriptures; and



not only of them, but of Mohammed and Joseph Smith; and it is Kant, the philosopher, who is authority for the trustworthiness of the same claim as made by Swedenborg, the latter, when in Denmark, having, according to Kant's testimony, accurately described to him at the time of their occurrence, certain events—a fire, for instance—taking place in Stockholm.\* So much as to the general connection between what are termed sacred writings and the other methods in which effects coming from or through subconscious agency manifest themselves.

\*A similar claim is made also by the essayist mentioned on page 72. It is said that, some years before the essays there described began to be written, this person, who had been for many years an invalid, felt one day a chill coming on, and, at the same moment, began to describe a supposed scene outside the window—an Oriental pasture-ground and a shepherd who apparently took possession of this person's body, which, rendered perfectly rigid, fell to the floor. The attendant, instead of being allowed to tender assistance, was urged to take a pen and write as dictated. What was dictated was a prediction, which came true, that, from that hour, there should be no more sickness, and that, in time, something of practical importance to the world, which subsequent events have caused to be associated with these essays, should be revealed through the agency of the invalid. As, too, in the cases of Mohammed, Swedenborg, and Smith, this person does not assume to have been influenced to supplant Christianity, but merely to interpret and develop certain phases of it. The whole story, which reads like a leaf torn from a life of a Joan of Arc, the author himself has heard from the lips both of the person receiving these communications and—unless in this one regard his memory fail him—of the person to whom the first communication was dictated.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MIND'S CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CONSCIOUS INTELLECTION TO THAT WHICH IS RECEIVED THROUGH THE SUBCONSCIOUS

Subconscious and Conscious Influences Manifested in All Forms of Intellection—Value of That Obtainable from the Former Depends on the Character of That Given by the Latter—Obligation of an Inspired Man to Interpret Promptings from the Subconscious by His Conscious Intellection—Fulfilment of This Obligation Characteristic of Writers—Consequent Intellectual Progress Connected with This Form of Inspired Communication—Recognizing Relationship of Christian to Other Forms of Inspiration Does Not Impair the Authenticity and Authority of the Christian Scriptures—Or Lessen One's Veneration for Them—Nor Does the Acknowledgment That Signs and Wonders Are Wrought in Other Religions—The Testimony of the Christian Scriptures Upon This Subject—Rationality of the Scriptural Test as Applied to Spiritism—Hudson's Theory—Importance of Investigating Spiritism—The Dangers Attendant Upon Accepting, Without Thinking, Its So-called Revelations Also Threaten Those Accepting, in the Same Way, Revelation in Any Other Form.

As was indicated on page 56, the range of a man's physical possibilities include results attributable both to subconscious and to conscious control; and it is logical to infer that the same is true of his mental possibilities. In other words, it is logical to infer that some effects of both conscious and subconscious control are to be found in everything that the mind does. In religion the thoughts and emotions which are first influenced may be supposed, for reasons already given, to be in the subconscious region, the results of which

dominate over results—which nevertheless, as we shall find hereafter, must interpret them—in the conscious region; whereas in science, the thoughts and emotions first influenced may be supposed to be in the conscious region, the results of which dominate over results in the subconscious region. Let it be understood therefore that while, for theoretical purposes, we can separate subconscious from conscious mental action, this is not because conceptions in either religion or science are supposed to be determined by either kind of action exclusively.

The exact truth seems to be that whatever is received through subconscious agency is liable to be more or less modified by thoughts and feelings in some conscious mind. This conscious mind may be either that of the person who is being influenced, or inspired, as we say, by or through his own subconscious intellection; or it may be the mind of another who, through the combined results of conscious and subconscious processes, may be supposed to be furnishing external suggestions to the inspired person. If the conscious mind be that of the inspired person himself, the quality and value of that to which he is inspired will depend upon his own intellectual and spiritual attainments and character. Nothing seems to have been more clearly proved than the fact thus stated. In the degree in which a man becomes wise, the promptings of his conscience, for instance, which furnish one phase in which sub-intellection manifests itself, coincide with the deductions of rational judgment and inference. Moreover

—and this fact is interesting—in the degree in which there is this coincidence; *i.e.*, in the degree in which the effects of subconscious mentality are exactly paralleled by those of conscious mentality—in this degree the mind itself becomes oblivious of any distinction between conscious and subconscious processes. It is a man not of high but of low intellectual and spiritual attainments who is constantly thinking and therefore talking about duty and conscience; that is to say, duty and conscience as such present their claims most strongly to the mind that is most strongly prompted to disregard them. The wise and good desire what is wise and good, and in pursuing them are hardly conscious that they have a conscience. So with the educated and refined as contrasted with their opposites. As a rule, only the comparatively uncultivated recognize a clear distinction between the results in their own minds of conscious and of subconscious intellection. In the degree in which a man's mentality is of a high order, or has been highly developed, he ceases to talk in an insane, trancelike, or even absent-minded way. At every stage, he seems to hold in check and to direct the course of subconscious logic by considerations that are in conformity with fact and common sense. This is probably one reason why the ancient Hebrews were forbidden to consult with familiar spirits or necromancers (Deut. 18; 10, 11), as well as why it is said, in 1 Cor. 14; 32, that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

Here there seems to be the clearest kind of an intimation of an obligation on the part of even an inspired man to use his own conscious mental powers in order to preserve the balance between his instinctive subconscious promptings—which promptings may be sometimes sympathetic, sometimes conscientious, and sometimes bigoted—and the rational influences of his conscious nature. Otherwise, if he do not preserve this balance, he may become merely an enthusiast or fanatic, as intimated in these verses following the one just quoted: (33) “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.” (40) “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Now notice that to none are the spirits more likely to be subject than to a prophet who is a writer. For he, as a rule, is a thinker, and therefore a man who, however unconsciously his mind may work at times, is always more or less under the influence of suggestions from the conscious region, even if merely because he is always accustomed, before his words are committed to script, to review and to correct them. This is true even when he is not completely aware that he is thus reviewing them. Perhaps it is not too much to say that no thoroughly cultivated man will ever, whatever may be the sources of his inspiration, allow his thoughts to leave him before they have been filtered through the clarifying criticism of his conscious mind. For this reason, sacred literature is more conformed to the rational results of mental action than is any other form of religious influence.

Is not this fact sufficient to explain the remarkable intellectual and spiritual progress which begins to characterize the people of all countries just as soon as they begin to hold the theory that religious truth can be wholly or chiefly communicated through sacred writings? A peculiarity of the Hebrew religion was a belief in the authority of a traditional written law; and the people were forbidden to consult familiar spirits (Deut. 18; 10, 11) or to hearken to diviners (Jer. 27; 9), who, but for these traditional Scriptures, would probably have been the chief agents of religious instruction. The result of following the injunctions of a written law, rather than of leaders like these, was a cautious, reflective, calculating habit of mind which two thousand centuries have not sufficed to eradicate from the character of the race. The same characteristics have been developed, too, among Protestant Christian nations, causing them, in this regard, to present a sharp contrast to the other Christian nations, with whom a written word is not so exclusively authoritative. A similar characteristic is evident also among the people of China and Japan, who are guided by the writings of Confucius, as contrasted with the inhabitants of Central Asia and of Africa, where sacred books have less influence than have fakirs and other supposed religious wonder-workers.

It is sometimes thought, especially in Christian communities, that any attempt to trace all the different results of inspiration, and, therefore, all possible forms



of revealed religion to or through exactly the same mediumship of occult mental action is practically the same as an attempt to lessen a belief in the authenticity and authority of the sacred writings of the Church, and thus to deprive the world of any trustworthy standards of faith and practise. Let us consider, for a little, whether this opinion is justified. To begin with, is it not a fact that the vast majority of those who reject the teachings of the Bible do so because at heart materialists? And are they not materialists largely because they fail to recognize that there is any subconscious, or hidden, mental nature, or any consequent possibility of one's being influenced from a spiritual or hidden source? Did they realize these facts, and, therefore, the fact that the method of receiving truth represented in the Scriptures is not out of analogy with things that, with reasonable frequency, fall to the lot of human experience in other directions, might not the chief cause of their doubts be removed? And if this cause were removed, might not the acceptance of the plausibility of the main proposition with reference to inspiration preserve for the theologian a large number of arguments otherwise not available; and with these might he not substantiate important subordinate propositions?

But, says, perhaps, the objector, the view that has been presented implies that the mind acts according to the same method when coming into possession both of that which is religiously true, and of that which is

religiously false; and this view tends to lessen the relative esteem in which one should regard the former. At first thought, this inference is natural, perhaps, but will it stand the test of reflection? To say that, in both cases, the method of receiving the truth is the same is not to say that the truth itself is the same. Because we receive information about both cold stone and red-hot iron through the same sense of touch, it does not follow that the things felt are the same, or affect us similarly. To acknowledge that many different cases may involve a method of becoming acquainted with objective influences such as do not necessitate communication through one of the five physical senses, does not involve acknowledging the equal trustworthiness of all things communicated through the method. It does not involve ranking every mind-reader or "medium" with the great prophets. To perceive partial analogies between the influence exerted by the former and by the latter does not involve giving a similar rating to all of them. But it does involve a recognition of the use, in all cases, of similar mental possibilities. It does involve this very logical conclusion of common sense—that, only in the degree in which men realize that there is some method of influencing them through an objective appeal of which they become conscious not from without but from within, can they realize that the kingdom of God—tho there may be much there besides this—is, as stated in Luke 17; 21, within them.

But this line of argument, the objector may say again, involves an admission that not only revealed words, but "signs and wonders" that accompany and attest the authority of these words, are common to all religions; and are not necessarily fraudulent in inferior religions. Yes; but is this admission dangerous? Is it not more dangerous to hold an opposite theory? Would you have people accept as true what a man says merely because he works what seem to be miracles? Magicians, hypnotizers, mind-readers, clairvoyants, fortune-tellers, all do this, and some of them who can tell with remarkable accuracy numbers of things that one has done in the past, as well as what is going on at a distance, frequently make statements that are utterly untrustworthy when referring to the most ordinary occurrences. What would be the result if the words of such were taken for the eternal, the infinite, and the absolute truth? Many of us refuse to follow the ecclesiastical guidance of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon faith. Yet much of his influence is attributable to the fact that he was a successful reader of experience, character, and thought through a "peep-stone," as it was termed. Which theory would conventional Christians have had a right to consider the more dangerous to the regions visited by him—that which denies the existence of a method of mental action like his unless one is divinely inspired, or that which admits its existence even where there is no divine inspiration?

It seems as if here, at least, the writers of the Bible were right. They did not deny that the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28; 7-25) or Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8; 9-11) could produce genuinely supernatural results. They admitted that the wise men of Egypt "did *in like manner* with their enchantments" to Moses (Ex. 7; 11). But truth was not therefore attributed to the utterances of such characters. There was a clear intimation that, tho "signs and wonders" may legitimately call attention to a religious leader, there are better ways through which to assure oneself of the truth of his utterances. "Blessed are they," said Jesus, "that hear the word of God, and keep it. An evil generation . . . seek a sign" (Luke 11; 28, 29). "Believe not every spirit," even tho it be a spirit, said John, "but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4; 1).

On the whole, is not this that the Apostle John enjoins a sensible thing to do; and a sensible principle upon which to act when doing it? Does it not afford the best "working plan" to recommend to those who seem in danger of allowing credulity or superstition to overbalance their judgment? If we seek to influence them by telling them that they are dupes or con-sorters with evil spirits, we may merely repel them. If not angry with us, they may, at least, lose confidence in our opinions. But in the degree in which we succeed in getting them to try the supposed spirits we may hope, in case they be deceived, to have them discover the fact. It is not the man of open mind—the

man who is willing frankly and fairly to try a new thing, and think it over before passing judgment on it—who is in danger of becoming a victim to false notions. It is the man of closed mind, who is willing to think about nothing. To him alone does one sparrow, no matter what the season, make a summer; and one psychic phenomenon—no matter how orthodox he has been before—prove the presence of a true prophet. No wonder his friends try to keep him away from “mediums.” If these know one thing that he fails to understand, or to have learned, he may imagine that they know all things. Of course, they do not, and can not; and what they do know, or can know, they frequently fail to report correctly. The record of the police courts of every large city reveal that many a “professional” fortune-teller, clairvoyant, or medium is merely a paid agent, leading the credulous into speculation, and even, occasionally, into vice. The slight facility in mind-reading which enables him to give his visitors’ names and vaguely tell half a dozen incidents of their past lives is supposed to guarantee infallible wisdom of advice with reference to buying stock in some mine that has no value, or to seeking employment in some house in which virtue is by no means its own reward. Even a “professional” who intends no harm may be indolent or self-indulgent, or, at least, loath, for a few dimes, to undergo the nervous exhaustion frequently incident upon a genuine practise of his “gift.” The author himself, upon placing

his hand on the heart of one man when in this abnormal state, found it beating at the rate of almost two hundred strokes a minute. No wonder if the "medium" thus affected preferred ordinarily, as was said of him, to practise sleight of hand, accompanied by tales conjured from his own normal imagination. Other "mediums," again, who have no wish to deceive, are so constituted, sympathetically, that the very hypnotic susceptibility enabling them to give reports from the subconscious, forces them to report, more than anything else, that which is in the thought and wish of their visitor. Others still—and this is a very frequent result—with the most honest intentions, seem unable to distinguish what subconscious intellection, supposed to be sent on its journey, sees or hears from what consciousness imagines it possible to see or hear. Of course, to follow implicitly the advice of either of these last two classes would be about as wise as to follow that of an insane person. Finally, there are others who, tho they seem to be able to distinguish the mental action that is subconscious, mistake its significance, and, as in the case mentioned on page 66, give advice that is erroneous.

Thomas J. Hudson, in his "*Laws of Psychic Phenomena*," attributes all occult communications to subconscious mentality, acting either independently or as influenced by the conscious or unconscious thoughts or feelings of others. Modern spiritists do not believe that this theory can account for all the facts. Owing



to communications apparently received from some person who has passed away, and who only, as is alleged, could know of occurrences that are mentioned, they attribute many of the phenomena of which we have been speaking to the influence of spirits. But suppose that one accept this theory—what then? Does it change, in the least, the conditions pointed out in the last paragraph? May not communications coming through a genuine medium be just as untrustworthy as they would be if coming through one whose “gift” was owing to some phase of what is termed mere hypnotism? Are not many statements that are made by mediums untrue? Are not many of their prophecies never fulfilled? Is not much of their advice misleading? Suppose that a medium have every personal trait necessary to genuineness, honesty, and an intelligent interpretation of communications. May not, now and then, some deceitful spirit indite them? What indisputable proof can we find that they are indited by that lost friend of ours, say our mother, or by that famous warrior, say Napoleon, or by that religious man, say Beecher, whom the spirit purports to be? Now add one more consideration, which is that in the vast majority of cases predictions given in this way that are afterward fulfilled attract, when first heard, little attention, and are brought to an issue, as in the cases mentioned on pages 69 and 91, without any directing effort on the part of the one receiving them; and does not the value of such advice for com-

mercial or any materially practical purposes appear exceedingly slight? And do not the dangers of following the advice appear correspondingly great?

We should not overlook the fact, however, that this whole subject, considered theoretically or theologically, is in itself of great importance. What can be more important than that which concerns the apprehension of the possibilities, mental or spiritual, of the subconscious processes of mind—of their capabilities of receiving and giving impressions, whether before death or after it? On the whole, therefore, notwithstanding the dangers, this importance justifies philosophic and scientific investigation. Nor, in refutation of this view, is it sufficient to quote the old Hebrew laws against witchcraft and sorcery, as in Deut. 18; 10, 11. These laws, much as they may have been needed in order to uphold, in an unscientific age, the authority of a theocracy governed by a priesthood, can not be proved to be applicable to the same extent in our own age and circumstances; and if they could be proved to be so, a strong argument could be framed to show that they do not apply to an investigating attitude of mind, but to the opposite of this—to an attitude of mind in which, waiving the exercise of his own judgment and reason, a man is looking to the occult for that which can take the place of them. We may be sure that, in this world, nothing can ever rightly do this—a statement that is equally applicable whether one be seeking to solve the petty problems of material life or

the profounder ones of spiritual life. Every circumstance connected with the formation or development of character proves that our own minds are given us to be used by ourselves. Nor should we expect any worthy gain in life, individual or collective, from a course in which any other agency is allowed to interfere with our using them to the utmost degree that is possible.

The trustworthiness of this view will be confirmed upon our recalling that the misunderstandings and errors incident to the form of psychic communications just considered are not peculiar to it, but are likely to occur in connection with any similarly occult method of influencing thought and emotion. Of course, the communications considered inspired in Christianity differ greatly from those in spiritism. The former are handed down the ages in written records, and, because these require more intelligence on the part of the communicators than does any other form of communication, we may suppose their results to be more intelligent. At the same time, as stated in the Introduction to this volume, all forms of inspired communication, even those in sacred books, can be proved historically to involve more or less ambiguity and tendency to misapprehension. Nor is this fact, as applied even to the Christian Scriptures, without its dangers. How many times and for how many centuries has the right to be educated, to think for oneself, and to follow the dictates of one's own conscience been denied, and the

right to enforce acceptance of officials and dogmas through exercise of extreme cruelty and persecution been affirmed!—all in supposed fulfilment of injunctions, or examples of the proper methods of obeying injunctions, given in the Bible! No candid mind, considering the subject fully, can fail to admit that the errors incident upon following, without exercising rational discrimination, the dictation of a spirit-medium are also incident—tho more subtly, perhaps, and to a far less degree—upon following, without exercising the same, the dictations of the Christian Scriptures. In these errors attendant upon not interpreting the Scriptures rightly we have a reason for the careful study of the nature of revelation in addition to the reason mentioned in our Introduction, which concerned their being discredited by thoughtful minds on account of their apparent inaccuracies.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NECESSARILY SUGGESTIVE CHARACTER OF INSPIRED OR REVEALED TRUTH

Ambiguity and Indefiniteness Seem Characteristic of the Communications Received Through Inspiration and Revelation—The Method of Action of the Inner Sphere of the Mind May Render This Result Necessary—We Can Study This Method Through the Analogous Methods of Hypnotism—Limitations of This Study—Hypnotism Influences Through Suggestion, Which Leaves Expression Free and, When Influencing Different Minds, Different—The Bearing of This Argument—Analogies from Hypnotism May Explain Many Things Assigned to Spiritual Influence in the Scriptures—This Is so of Conversion—Of Atonement, of Spiritual Unity, of Creation, of Probation, of Life After Death—Suggestive Revelation May Be More Influential Than Dictatorial—Additional Evidence of This—Suggestive Control in Religion Conforms to Divine Control as Manifested in External Nature—Suggestive Nature of Revealed Truth Already Widely Acknowledged by Christians—This Acknowledgment Not Antagonistic to Continued Study of the Scriptures—Illustration of the Way in Which the Same Inspired Truth May Be Exprest in Different Forms—Different Legends in Different Religions May Give Expression to the Same Fundamental Truth—Influence of This Fact Upon Future Theologians.

That which has been unfolded in the chapters preceding this has sufficed, it is hoped, to make clear that, in all religions there is more or less acknowledgment of the existence of an occult method of influencing the mind irrespective of the ordinary methods of communicating with it through one of the five senses. In connection with the acknowledgment of this method, let us now recall what was said in the Introduction

with reference to the acknowledgment of an effect of ambiguity and indefiniteness produced when the subject of the occult influence endeavors to describe or to explain his experiences to others. Even those inclined to deny in words this ambiguity and indefiniteness are obliged to confess them in their deeds, or they would not admit to their libraries so many books that interpret differently the same passages in the same sacred writings. Such books prove, beyond question, a condition that exists, and exists, so far as one can judge, universally. But can it be said that this condition *should* exist, and this by *necessity*? If the latter could be proved, it would do more than anything yet advanced in this argument to explain the conditions, as well as to reconcile our minds to those features of them, which, according to what was said on page 7 of the Introduction, seem inconsistent with what may reverently be termed the obligations of Omniscience.

So far we have considered the subject before us, as it were, indirectly and from the outside, judging of the methods of impressing and expressing influence exerted upon the inner sphere of the mind from the results—*i.e.*, from what men so influenced say or do. But are we sure that these results in expression are traceable to such impressions as those to which we have assigned them? Of course, we think so; but are we sure of it; and, if not, is there any way of becoming sure of it? Is there any way in which, in accordance with the strictest scientific requirements, we can show how



the inner mind is influenced and how it expresses the results of this influence? Is there any way in which one can do for the subject before us something akin to that which is done by the philosopher when, from metaphysics, which has enabled him to surmise the methods of the mind's action, he turns to physics, and laying bare, as it were, the nerves of the brain, unravels their tangled skein, and seeks for accurate knowledge according to the methods of physiological psychology?

Yes, there is a way of so studying the subject. There is a way, not only of surmising, but of knowing as a fact, that the inner processes of mind can be influenced immediately, and not, as through the senses, mediately; and of knowing also that, when thus influenced, they invariably not only do but must express the results of this influence ambiguously, indefinitely, inaccurately, and, at times, to all appearance, conflictingly. And this way is one the truth of which can be demonstrated scientifically. It is found in hypnotism—not hypothetical hypnotism to which have been assigned all sorts of unproved phenomena such as are used to sustain the claims of extreme spiritists, but scientific hypnotism, the phenomena of which, and the methods of producing which, can be studied by all, and the laws of which are acknowledged by all who have studied the subject intelligently. The facts acknowledged are these. A scientific hypnotizer, when once he has his subjects under control, can influence their thoughts

and feelings irrespective of that which, at the same time, their senses perceive in the real world. Notwithstanding what they actually see, hear, or experience in other ways, he can make them believe that they see, hear, or experience something else; and he can also make them give expression in words and deeds to what they think and feel with reference to this something else. Such a hypnotizer does not purport to be acting under the control of a spirit—*i.e.*, to be inspired to do something of the methods and results of which he himself may remain unconscious. He claims to be, and every one who has examined into the nature of the influence that he exerts recognizes him to be, acting as a rational man, fully conscious of his own methods, and capable of reporting authoritatively what results from them. He can know, therefore, and can explain to us, the character of the influence which he exerts over the inner mental processes, and just the degree of accuracy with which those whom he has hypnotized give expression to that which they have received from him. Accordingly, unless the mind when influenced in other ways than through the eyes and ears, acts differently in different cases—which we can not logically infer—the method in which the hypnotizer influences this may be supposed to follow the analogy of the method in which a spirit—of whatever rank or power—influences it.

Not, of course, that hypnotism, or anything else, can explain everything that we might like to know about

the method. Nothing in this world ever explains everything. What is important for us, in the present case, is that we should recognize the fact of the existence of the method and of its expressional results. This is really about all that we can know of any method that we term natural. When we have learned that a certain plant grows in a certain place, in a certain way, developing into certain limbs, leaves, flowers, or berries that produce a certain effect, we have about reached the possible limits of human knowledge with reference to the plant. When one asks why it grows as it does, we can do no more than refer the cause to its own nature. So when any one asks why the mind, when influenced irrespective of ordinary effects communicated through the eyes or ears, expresses itself as it does, we can do no more than refer the cause of this to its own nature. But, notwithstanding the limits of our information, when we have really found out what this nature causes the mind to do, just as when we have found out what the nature of the various plants about us causes them to do, we have found out what is of immense practical value both to thought and to life. Moreover as, in the nature of things—to go back to the same reason—the Creative Power can not be expected to change the characteristics once given the plant, even tho, when ignorantly used for food, it may prove deleterious to the body, so the same Power can not be expected to change the characteristics once given the inner sphere of the mind, even tho, when

ignorantly consulted for spiritual guidance, it may prove deleterious to the spirit. As rational beings, what we have to do is to study and to learn the nature of mind, as of other things which experience presents to us, and then to think and to act in accordance with our knowledge.

It seems as if such considerations as these should cause every philosophic theologian to study carefully the methods of hypnotism. What are the chief of these?—The preliminary effect, as most of us know, is a deadening of the outer consciousness. This is produced in different ways. Sometimes passes with the hands are made in front of the patient's eyes; sometimes his attention is fixed steadily on a revolving disk, or upon a stationary object; and sometimes merely a command is given. For our purposes, the preliminary methods of inducing the state are immaterial. What concerns us is the method of exerting influence over thoughts and feelings after the state has been induced. What is the method? Hypnotists agree in declaring it to be the method of suggestion. The patient is made to have some general conception. He is told, for instance, that he is a fisherman or a fish, a soldier like Napoleon or a President like Garfield, a Democratic stump-speaker or a Republican office-holder. Then he is allowed to develop the suggestion in his own way. It is usually asserted, too, that, when once the suggestion has been given, whether based upon what is true or false, all the processes of memory or logic

which are started in the patient's mind are developed with flawless consistency. At least, the inhibitions and checks which seem inevitably to introduce into the processes of conscious logic more or less of that which is irrelevant, are removed. When, for instance, a patient is told that he is George Washington, or is given a logical problem to solve, or is made to improvise an oration upon some subject, or attributed to some public man whose opinions are well known, the result seems never to fail. It is like that which might come from a perfectly constructed automatic machine. Just here, however, in order to avoid a misapprehension that might arise, it is important to notice that if, in such a state, a patient be asked to repeat deeds that he has seen, or words that he has heard, he will usually do this with marvelous accuracy; but, in connection with this fact, it is still more important to notice that such cases of repetition afford no argument from analogy which can be applied to inspiration, for the reason that in them the patient is presumably limited to what has affected his mind through the outer senses of seeing and hearing, whereas in inspiration the inner mind is presumably influenced mainly by effects not produced through the outer senses. In this place, therefore, we are called upon to consider such cases only as do not involve a mere quickening of the normal memory with reference to things actually seen or heard. With reference to all these cases, it can be said that the deeds and words through which the patient repre-

sents that which has been suggested are often wholly unexpected by the one who has hypnotized him. Indeed, the methods through which two or more patients represent the same suggestion are never exactly the same. They can not be, for one reason, because they depend to such an extent upon what previous experience has stored in each one's memory. Besides this, no two persons, probably, are fitted by nature to render their representations equally intelligible. Different patients, therefore, frequently give expression to the same suggestion in very different ways. Nevertheless, the general effect produced upon the methods of expression of all the patients under the influence of any one suggestion at any one time is the same—a statement which, using terms in a broad way, could be paralleled by saying that the representations, tho differing *in form*, are all alike *in spirit*.

Before going on to illustrate and amplify what has been said let us try to bring clearly before our minds the reason why it is important to illustrate and amplify them. Let us notice the bearing of them upon our general subject. This may be briefly stated as follows: if suggestion be the method through which, irrespective of any form of communication made through the senses, the inner or subconscious processes of mind are influenced in such cases as are susceptible of full examination, it is logical to conclude that the same may be the method through which these processes are influenced in cases not susceptible of full examination.



There may be and must be different characteristics in the sources of this influence and different degrees in which it exerts its control, and therefore there must be differences in the character of the expression and in the accuracy with which it represents the effects of the control; but until the human mind is changed so as to become what all known facts prove it not to be, we have no rational right to infer that any quality or quantity of such control can make the influence which is exerted anything but suggestive, or the expression of the effects of the influence anything but that which is natural to the expression of suggestion.

Just at this point it is not unlikely that some reader will be inclined to follow this line of thought no further. To compare the highest inspiration to anything resembling an effect accompanying hypnotism, or revelation to anything in the least resembling an hypnotic suggestion, may seem to involve suppositions which a due regard for the dictates of reverence or conscience should not tolerate. But let him pause and consider the subject for a moment just as it is presented. Not the slightest intimation has been given that the influences produced by a man in hypnotism are presumed to be on a level with those produced by the Supreme Spirit in inspiration. It has been supposed merely that the two may be produced by a similar method because affecting a similar inner sphere of the mind. Thus understood, what is here to be said may afford illustrations by way of analogy which may prove exceedingly

helpful, inasmuch as they may make certain claims of religion appear more in conformity than they sometimes do to accepted laws of nature and of reason. For instance, Mr. Thomas Jay Hudson in "The Law of Psychic Phenomena" maintains that the result of suggestion exerted upon subconscious mental action in hypnotism is in exact accord with that produced by the central doctrine of Christianity, namely, salvation through faith. When a patient is told "You are Abraham Lincoln," it is through exercising a form of faith that he voluntarily yields his own will, believes the words that are told him, and becomes, to his own conception, what the hypnotizer suggests. Yet the hypnotizer suggests this in only a very general way, and watches, with as much interest as any one else, to see what will be the result of his subject's conception of Mr. Lincoln's character. In like manner, according to the Christian theory, when the Christ told men that they were sons of God they became these by believing in him and in his words, and voluntarily yielding their wills to him; but at the same time he merely suggested a conception which they were left free to carry out in their own ways. He did not for either individuals or communities dictate actions or formulate creeds. His followers were "called unto liberty" (Gal. 5; 13). Again, if one wonder how faith can permanently change character, even ordinary hypnotism, which is not a divine but merely a human agency subordinating consciousness in such ways as to allow the subconscious

to be influenced directly, may throw some light upon this subject.

Observe the following from an article by Dr. R. Osgood Mason on "The Educational Uses of Hypnotism," from the *North American Review* for October, 1896. "In the summer of 1884," he says, "there was at the Salpêtrière, a young woman of a [deplorable type—a criminal lunatic, filthy in habits and violent in demeanor, and with a lifelong history of impurity and theft. M. Auguste Voisin, one of the physicians of the hospital staff, undertook to hypnotize her at a time when she could be kept quiet only by the strait-jacket and the continuous douche to the head. She would not look at the operator, but raved and spat upon him. M. Voisin, however, kept his face close to hers, and followed her eyes wherever she moved them. In ten minutes she was asleep, and in five minutes more she passed into the sleep-walking or somnambulistic state, and began to talk incoherently. This treatment being repeated on many successive days, she gradually became sane when in the hypnotic condition, tho she still raved when awake. At length she came to obey in her waking hours commands imprest upon her in her trance—trivial matters, such as to sweep her room—then suggestions involving marked changes in her behavior; finally, in the hypnotic state, she voluntarily exprest regret for her past life, and, of her own accord, made good resolutions for the future, which she carried out when awake, and the improvement in her conduct

was permanent. Two years later M. Voisin wrote that she was a nurse in a Paris hospital, and that her conduct was irreproachable."

There are several other of the accredited results of religious influence that a recognition of these analogies between it and hypnotic influence may render more conceivable. Take, for instance, the effects supposed to be produced by the incarnation and atonement of Jesus. As a rule, even such a degree of confidence as must antedate the influence of a hypnotizer must depend upon his subject's belief not only in his ability, but in his good-will and kindly interest. But what can afford the highest evidence of these?—what but love? And how does love manifest itself? In this world it is simply a universal law that love, from that of a friend to that of a mother, manifests itself in self-sacrifice, and the degree of it in the degree of self-sacrifice. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend" (John 15; 13). Notice again the conception of the spiritual unity of the Christ with God, as well as the associated conception of which the Church, with its literalism (when applied exclusively, as all literalism must be, to only a single application of the general principle involved), is in danger of losing sight—the conception of the spiritual unity of all believers with God, the conception exprest in the prayer of Jesus, in John 17; 21: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Can anything in human experience cause

us to conceive of the possibility of spiritual unity existing at the same time with separate personality, as well as an understanding of the ascertained fact that a hypnotizer can actually control the mind of his patient, and yet, as in the case in which he tells him that he is Abraham Lincoln, can allow him virtual freedom of both thought and action; allow him, that is, to develop his own conception of Mr. Lincoln's character?\*

Again, take the statement in the opening of the Bible, that the world was created in six days, and the corresponding statements in Is. 34; 4, and Rev. 6; 14, that the heavens shall finally be rolled together as a scroll. It may be said with truth that there is only one possible explanation in accordance with which such statements can be shown to be analogous to anything supposable in human experience. A hypnotizer can make a dozen or more men all agree in conceiving of themselves as being in a place wholly different from that in which they were a moment before. What is to prevent millions of thinking creatures from being made to perceive a world created out of nothing, and kept believing in it for generations and then being made as suddenly to see this

\*The fact that a subject, tho hypnotized and thus caused mentally to develop a false premise (see page 148), nevertheless usually continues to give expression to his own idiosyncrasies—a man, for instance, to manifest his sense of dignity, and a woman her sense of modesty—is important. It shows not only the groundlessness of much of the fiction which ascribes the commission of crime to hypnotic influence, but also a reason for supposing that the agent of expression, however elsewise influenced, is, in the last analysis, the subconscious *self*, and so for supposing also, as far as the conditions throw light upon life as it will be when wholly free from the body, that *selfhood*, individuality of character, will continue in the future state.

world disappear? Nothing except a lack in the universe of power able to exert the same kind of influence on all minds that is now exerted on a few minds. Similar considerations may show us why it is rational to suppose that the future life of the individual should be wholly determined by his present life, not only spiritually considered but intellectually. In the results of hypnotism, we have a picture of what the mind does when its own physical powers are not dominant over it. What does it do? It goes on developing the premise last or, at least, most strikingly presented to it. It perceives in itself and in its visible surroundings whatever the hypnotizer suggests as being there. It experiences the literal, as well as poetic, truth of what Milton says:

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

*Paradise Lost, 1.*

Let the suggestion embody a belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of souls—what could prevent the mind's continuing, after being freed from the body, to live on forever in the same belief? "To-day," said Jesus to the penitent thief upon the cross—"to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23; 43). Who shall say that it is not strictly in accordance with the laws of this world as well as of the next that this promise should be fulfilled? Again, the inner processes of thought, when not outwardly checked, develop, as has been said, with complete recollective, logical, and



illustrative consistency that which previous experience has stored. Now so far as what is thus developed has its germs in previous experience, so far is it not logical to conclude that spiritual life in the next world must continue to unfold from ideals formed in this world? and if so, have we not a provision for eternal limitation? But if, at the same time, the mind through memory, logic, and imagination can develop its stores in ways practically infinite, then, in connection with limitation, have we not also a provision for infinite expansion? And if we can answer such questions in the affirmative, can we not perceive more clearly than otherwise one reason why life in this world should be one of probation and acquirement, but in the next world one of fruition and rest? Besides this, if minds be able to have occult intercourse with one another, what is to prevent the discoveries, inventions, and conceptions of every age, which must necessarily, perhaps, be confined to a material plane, from being a help to those who have gone before, and who are now upon a spiritual plane? If nothing can prevent this, then we may understand why a patriarch of old should expect to be blest owing to the character and achievements of his descendants, and why the presence of a cloud of witnesses on high (Heb. 12; 1) should be used as an inducement to one who cares little for anything except the opportunity of helping others.

So much for certain analogies between the suggestive influence accompanying hypnotism and that which

in religion is termed inspiration. But what, it may be asked, about the analogies between the results of suggestion and the results of inspiration which are termed revelations? Is not the attempt to prove that the statements of a religious leader or writer should be considered suggestive, rather than dictatorial, equivalent to an attempt to lessen a man's regard for the authority of the source from which the statements come, and to diminish their influence upon him? It undoubtedly is equivalent to this as applied to the letter or form of the statements, but not as applied to the spirit of them; not as applied to the general subject-matter or the principle to which the statements give expression. Nor does the conception that the general subject-matter, or the principle involved, is expressed suggestively tend to weaken such effects as this is fitted to exert upon the minds to which it is addressed. If we be told that a father trains his son not through the use of explicit, dictatorial injunctions, but by way of suggestion, we do not necessarily infer that he has less authority or influence with his son than have other parents who use the other method. We are often inclined to think the contrary. Any parents with superior physical strength who dictate what their boy shall do, will be obeyed as long as they are in sight. But this method will not always cause the boy to obey them when they are not in sight. Nothing but regard and love for his parents will make him do this. Regard and love are occasioned by manifestations of wisdom and sympathy; and these traits,

in the treatment of a child are never manifested as fully as by the parent who governs through suggestion. It is in the degree in which they are manifested that his children acquire and incorporate as habits in their characters his own methods of thinking and acting. Why should not the same principle apply to the methods in which the heavenly Father deals with his children?

There are other reasons, too, why spiritual influence should be supposed to be exerted in the suggestive way that has been indicated. In what way except through the endeavor to understand suggestions, and to embody them in definite mental and material forms, can spiritual life develop? Even by divinity itself could it be developed according to any other method? A fully formulated, dictatorial control relieves a man of the necessity of thinking. A suggestive control obliges him to think. Oblige him to do this, where both he and others have liberty, and no matter how unwisely he may, at first, carry out suggestions, a right tendency thus started will ultimately attain righteousness; a little leaven, after a time, after many generations, perhaps, will finally leaven the whole lump. It is probably because of a recognition of this principle that the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3; 6, speaks of himself and his fellow workers as being "ministers of the new testament; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." This statement, the history of the world has proved to be true. As a fact, the letter has killed. It has done this both be-

cause the theory of literalism, so conscientiously advocated, has been the death of any form of belief in the Scriptures on the part of large numbers who—debarred from a theory which might explain—could not fully ignore what to them have seemed to be discrepancies; and also because the truth, when considered only in itself, so far as it has been supposed to be identical with a form or a formula (see page 38) has failed to stimulate to activity, and so to spiritual life. To-day, as in the days of Adam and Eve, knowledge of good and evil, so far as it is accompanied by a desire for nothing beyond this, tends to spiritual death. The curse of bigotry and priestcraft lies not alone in the fact that by false forms and traditions they make void the truth, but that they make it void by true forms and traditions so far as they exalt these to undue importance; so far as they point to effects logical to thought or attractive to the eye, and say “Know these, or do these, and thou shalt live.” If the Church be paradise on earth, this latter Eden may have its tempter as surely as the former one. When a man is told that he can attain all that mind or soul can need through accepting some dogma, performing some ceremony, undertaking some service, what can be the result but to counteract the tendency to faith in that which is unseen? On earth the soul should walk by faith, because this leaves all about one an infinite margin that stimulates desire; and only through desire for surer, purer, better things can intellect be developed or spirit sanctified.

Such a view of divine influence as thus exerted in the invisible realm is the only one in harmony with the same as exerted in visible nature. This gives a brook rocks to rise above and ledges to dash upon, that, through their agency its volume and future speed may be increased. So, also, nature gives a man personal foes to rise above, and financial woes to dash upon, that, through their agency his wisdom and future energy may be increased. Amid material obstacles, the man who tries to save his life by flying from the conflicts granted to experience may lose it; but the man who pushes forward, tho he lose his life, may find it. Amid spiritual obstacles, the soul that has the faith to move is vivified with health; the one that is content to lie and sleep and dream, whoever or whatever may give the authority to do so, is only stiffened into death. Why should not the influence, in this regard, of the written word be exerted in analogy with that which is exerted by the unwritten word of nature?

Now let it be added, for the enlightenment of those who may fear that to answer this question in the affirmative would imperil the influence of the Christian Scriptures, that it has already been answered in the affirmative by millions who are still exerting not only a distinctly Christian but a Biblical influence. For years, during the time in which this work has been in contemplation, the author has been examining as well as he could the processes in the minds of people of such character. He has been trying, if possible, to discover,

beneath their own explanations, which seldom interpret correctly the real workings of the mind, what their actual beliefs were. As a result, he has found few, if at all intelligent, who did not practically accept the text of Scripture as suggestive rather than dictatorial. Nevertheless, owing to the influence upon them of doctrines which they had learned, they would seldom acknowledge this fact even to themselves. Would it not be of benefit to them, as well as to their associates of other or of no religions, if there could be some widely accepted philosophic principle in accordance with which theory and practise, in such cases, could be made to coincide?

Or, to consider the subject in another light, would the acceptance of such a principle interfere in the least with the interest or importance attaching to that textual study of the Scriptures, which, for centuries, has been the source of so much that has been stimulating to the general thought of the world, and been productive of so much of its progress? Would the acceptance of this principle not rather furnish a well-grounded reason which, hitherto, has been lacking, for ending the prejudice, bigotry, bitterness, and persecution which have frequently been manifested in connection with such study? As for the study itself, it is a grave mistake to suppose that this could be stimulated more by a belief in the absolute infallibility of the letter of the text than by the other theory. The most effective mental stimulus does not come from a feeling of cer-



tainty with reference to such a subject. One who has been led to conceive that the results of inspiration, from their very nature, must be mainly suggestive has obtained an additional inducement for studying them. He now feels impelled to do so because he knows that no brief, superficial reading will enable him to learn all that is in them. Why should this suffice to interpret what is termed the written word of the Spirit any more than a similarly superficial reading should suffice for the unwritten word that appears in nature? Upon those, therefore, by whom the theory presented in this book shall be accepted we need not expect any less influence to be exerted by theological discussions or leaders. There will be, however, this difference between this influence and that coming from many religious discussions and leaders of the past. Whatever thought this influence may awaken will be communicated to others in the only form in which it is possible for thought to be communicated successfully. No church that adopts the theory that the truth of inspiration is suggestive can logically try to cause men to accept it by the use either of physical or of moral force. Such a church will be compelled to recognize that a mind can accept thought only by thinking it.

Now let us go back to illustrate and amplify, as has been promised, what was meant by saying that the outer representation in word and deed of that which has been suggested to the inner mind, tho differing in form, may be alike in spirit. Here is an instance that

may exemplify this: the author knows of a case in which it is claimed that, through influence occultly exerted upon subconscious processes of thought, an attempt was made at a distance of a thousand or more miles to induce a man, who had not been met or heard of for years, to leave off a habit which the one who exerted the influence surmised rightly, tho psychically, to be undermining his physical and mental powers. The influence, purely argumentative in its own character, is said to have appealed to the subject—who did not become aware of the attempt till receiving, days later, a letter dated on the night in which it was made—in the form of a very startling dream, in which he seemed to see the figure of death, to feel it touch him, to experience dying, to awaken in a beautiful spiritual world, and there to be chased and caught by a hideous monster loathsome to sight, smell, and touch, who pretended to be a bosom friend, and gave himself the name of the habit from which it was sought to deliver him. Suppose this man, upon awakening, had told his dream, and others had accepted it, as a literal account of an actual “vision,” they would have done what millions have done in the past, and would have contributed their share to the formation of a new “myth.” It is possible, however, that some other man influenced according to the same method, in order to cure the same habit, would have had some other “vision,” and that the two “visions,” when compared, would have been found, in their details, to be very different, pos-

sibly conflicting. What then? Then those who had taken the details of either "vision" to be that which was of importance in it would have been obliged to think one or the other of the reports of the details to be false. Those, however, who had realized that both visions might be results upon minds, differently constituted and cultured, of an exactly similar suggestion, would have recognized that both might be true to this suggestion, and, also, tho apparently conflicting, true to one another.

It seems pertinent to ask here whether what has just been said may not serve somewhat to interpret a fact often noticed and at different times differently regarded. This fact is the similarity in import, notwithstanding differences in detail, of the representations of conditions in the spiritual world which have been at the basis of the beliefs and ceremonies of different religions. For instance, not only among the Hebrews, but in ancient Egypt, Greece, India, and Persia, in connection even with Polytheism, there was a recognition of the existence of one Supreme Being, and, in all but the Hebrew religion, a suggestion of a peculiar relationship between this Being and two others, such as, in Christianity, has been developed into the doctrine of the Trinity. Again, we find assigned to more than one of the chief religious leaders a virgin-birth,\* a life of holiness on earth, a death followed by a resurrection, and a devotion ever after, to the spiritual assistance of

\* See note on page 198.

his worshipers. All these things were represented as true of the Persian Mithras, many of them of the East Indian Buddha, most of them of the Egyptian Osiris; and they are suggested in the prophecies of the return to earth of such national heroes as Cæsar of Rome and Arthur of England. Similar ceremonies, too, have characterized most of these religions. The followers of Mithras observed sacraments, among which were baptism and the eucharist. Professor Franz Cumont's "*Mystères de Mithra*" is said to show a photograph of a bas-relief of the ceremony of the latter, in which bread in the form of a wafer bears upon it, strangely enough, the impression of a cross. A European attending to-day a Buddhist service in China or Japan might imagine himself to be in a Catholic church; but the resemblance in this case would be no closer than between a modern Protestant service and that of the Hebrews, or of the ancient Greek or Roman Stoics, or even of the present Mohammedans. Nor in listening to the exhortations in these religious gatherings would the differences noticed be as great as is sometimes imagined. In almost all of these religions there is, as in the Christian, an insistence upon the necessity of faith, fidelity, chastity, honesty, and holiness. Once in visiting a class-room in an American Congregationalist Missionary College in Japan, the author found that they were studying ethics, and that their text-book was one of the works of Confucius. As is well-known, the Christians of the third and fourth centuries used

to attribute everything in the heathen religions unmistakably resembling things in their own to the machinations of the devil, intended, through imitation, to deceive the elect, and capture them for his hostile camp. The same conclusion was reached by the Spanish fathers who first came to South America, and found among the Peruvians not only sacrificial ceremonies resembling those of the ancient Hebrews, but the distribution of bread and wine, confession, penance, and monasticism, which they had supposed to be peculiar to Christianity. Within the last hundred years, in view of what has been learned not only of the similarity between the rites of all the higher religions, but of the pure character of most of the teachings in them all, a more charitable theory has prevailed. This may be said to be exprest in the passage of the Bible chosen as an opening text by the late Dean Trench in his "Hulsean Lectures" on this subject, namely, "The desire of all nations shall come" (Hag. 2; 7). According to this theory, all of these religions—the higher ones, at least—owe their origin to the inborn rather than inspired struggle of man after truth, and all point to Christianity, in which is found a fulfilment of his inborn desire for an inspired revelation. It seems as if a broader interpretation than this might be acceptable in the near future. If no conditions in the spiritual world can ever be communicated to men except through the use of material symbols or forms, and if these can never represent the conditions fully or

adequately, nor to minds, differently constituted or cultured, in an exactly similar way, then different symbols or forms may be used, in different nations, for the purpose of expressing exactly the same truth or principle, and not only in Christianity, but in all these nations, they may be inspired.

When the future philosophic theologian comes to take in this conception, he will no longer be satisfied to study the sacred text of only his own form of religion, much less that of some commentator like Thomas Aquinas or John Calvin. He will study the text of all the higher religions, trying to find the similar import represented through their different legends, and the similar principle expounded in their not greatly differing precepts. Such an attitude of mind will almost infinitely elevate his aims and widen his horizon. It will cause him to search for the absolute, eternal, and infinite truth, and not merely, as, too frequently is the case now, for that which can be no more than relative to his own surroundings and purposes, if not to his own interests as the hired advocate of some institution endowed for the purpose of perpetuating current opinions irrespective of the influence which should naturally be exerted upon all opinions by advancing thought and knowledge. Then, too, those who are guided by such a theologian will come to have a philosophic reason for believing in the universal spiritual fatherhood of God and in the spiritual brotherhood of man. They will come also to have a reasonable hope that the spiritual aspirations of



mankind, fulfilled, as they undoubtedly have been—tho, possibly, not exclusively—in the ideal presented in the career of the historic prophet of Judea, will unite in such a way as to make literally true the prophecy that “all the kingdoms of the world” shall “become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ” (Rev. 11; 15).

## CHAPTER VI

### SIGNIFICANCE AND FORM IN SUGGESTED TRUTH

- A Conception Impressing Our Minds Is Not Identical with a Word Expressing It—The Latter Is a Result of Materializing the Conception—Use of Materialized Conceptions by Man and by the Creator—Universal Recognition of This Use—Appropriateness of Its Use in Inspiration and Revelation—How This Fact Modifies Certain Current Conceptions—Differences Between Scientific and Religious Truth—Application to Statements in the Bible—Rendering These Conformable to Reason—And to Philanthropy—Degrees of the Credibility of the Influence Occultly Exerted Through the Subconscious—Depends Upon the Truthfulness of the Suggestion Given It as a Premise—The Truthfulness of This Suggestion and of Its Results Must be Determined by the Action of Some Conscious Mind—Whose Conscious Mind This Is—It Is a Mind Influenced by Heredity and Environment—This Explains the Development of the Truth as Revealed in the Bible—The Explanation Accords with Biblical Statements—With General Opinion—This Conception Does Not Render Biblical Truth Less Determinant.

The thoughts brought out in the preceding chapter seem to carry with them the conclusion that, when normally expressed, the utterances of a mind supposed to be inspired, because influenced from within irrespective of appeals through eyes and ears, are illustrative rather than exactly reproductive of that which has impressed it. This conclusion will become stronger the more critically we examine the subject. We shall find, too, that the principle is applicable to the utterances even of such conceptions as are only indirectly traceable to influences exerted upon the inner sphere of the mind. All utterances, as made by men, assume the forms of

words. But what are words? They are not reproductions of anything in the mind; they are merely symbols of something there. Moreover, they are symbols which, tho used by several men in the same sense, by no means indicate necessarily that these men are representing through them the same conception. For instance, take such a word as "thirst" or "water." A dog, when he wants a drink, will run to and from a pail in which he has been accustomed to see water. He evidently has in mind a vision of this water, and not the word "water." He never uses the word, and probably, therefore, does not think of it. So with a child who can not talk, or a savage whose vocabulary is limited. Grown people who understand language use the word, and, possibly, think of it. But, besides this, they think of something else. Just as clearly as the dog thinks of a pail, a child of a tumbler, or a savage of a river, they may think, according to the place in which each has been accustomed to sate his thirst, of a spring, a water-pitcher, or a public bar. This is the same as to say that the same general impression or conception may appeal to the mind in the form of a different image, and, if this image were carefully described in language, would be exprest to others in a different word. Add to this now the fact that thought in the mind is never at rest; that one thought is always passing into other thoughts; that one image is always connecting itself with other images; and we must conclude that often out of the same psychic impression

revealing itself definitely as a single image, different minds may construct, by way of accretion, whole series of imaginative fabrics that in form are different from one another.

Now notice that the first image, and, of course, all the later images, are results of each mind's appropriating, for its purpose, objects or conditions that have been perceived in material nature. To each of these images it may give a name, which name develops into what we term a *word*. Any one will recognize this who knows about the origin of words. The word *is*, for instance, comes through the German *ist*, the Latin *est*, and the Greek *esti*, from the old Sanskrit word *as* indicating the act of breathing; and because whoever breathes exists, it means *to exist*. The Greek word for *spirit* meant originally *breath*; and as the breath, tho unseen, evidently keeps the body alive, spirit came to mean the unseen principle of life, that without which, when it departs, the body dies. So on through large numbers of words till we come to those of modern origin like *understanding*, *uprightness*, and *pastime*. It may be said, therefore, that, altho the first psychic impression produced on the mind may be spiritual, the moment this impression assumes definite form and becomes an image, either in the mind's conception or as represented in a picturesque word, and still more as this image connects itself with other images, the results become more or less materialized in character. In this form, tho occasioned by spiritual influence

and representing it, they can not be said to be spiritual in themselves. They are merely illustrations drawn from the material world of something spiritual, which otherwise could not be communicated to us through the use of eyes or ears. We are not justified, therefore, in claiming that these illustrations contain literal truth. Nor again are we justified in claiming that they contain no truth, or that they are not worthy of the most scrupulous study undertaken in order to ascertain what this truth is.

The principle involved in these statements has come to be virtually recognized by all thinkers. They acknowledge that, at every stage of intellection, a man is forced to use the forms of the material world in order to represent his mental processes. Otherwise they could not be perceived clearly nor understood intelligently even by himself, and much less by others to whom he wishes to communicate them. Take any one of the more important of the emotions that actuate us and we shall recognize this fact. Take that experience in some of the manifestations of which religious people believe that a man most resembles the Unseen One. Think how love, which is begotten often in a single glance, and is matured in a single thrill, gives vent to its invisible intensity. How infinite in range and in variety are those material forms of earth and air and fire and water which are used by man as figures through which to represent the emotion within him! What extended tho sweet tales, what endless repetitions of

comparisons from hills and valleys, streams and oceans, flowers and clouds, are made to revolve about that soul which, through the use of them endeavors to picture in poetry spiritual conditions and relations which would remain unrevealed but for the possibility of being thus indirectly symbolized! Nor is it man alone who is obliged to use the forms of material nature in order to reveal the workings of his spirit. He himself does this only, as it were, by way of imitation; only because he partakes of the nature and therefore must follow the methods of the Creative Spirit to which all men and all material nature owe their origin. If what has been said be true of the expression of human love, why should not the Great Heart whose calm beating works the pulses of the universe express divine love through similar processes evolving infinitely and eternally into forms not ideal and verbal, but real and tangible—in fact, into forms which we term those of nature?

Do we not all, subtly, at least, believe in the two statements just made? Do we not believe that material nature furnishes the representative implements through which a man creates language, and that it furnishes also the actual implements through which the Creative Spirit produces a language speaking, tho in a less articulate and distinct way, to our thoughts and emotions? Have not all who can understand this passage of Wordsworth accepted it as virtually true?



“ I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes  
The still, sad music of humanity.

“ . . . And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.”

*Lines Composed a few Miles above Tintern Abbey.*

But now, if in ordinary words, all men, as a rule, express themselves by appropriating material forms of nature through which to represent their thoughts, why should not an inspired man do the same? And if the Divine Spirit find expression in the “unwritten word” through material forms, why should not the same, or something in analogy with the same, be used in the methods of expression in the “written word?” This argument from analogy certainly seems approximately rational. Let us notice now how it applies to the interpretation of what are termed inspired Scriptures.

Here, at the outset, one is compelled to admit that a logical conclusion from the thoughts that have so far been presented will not permit all of the readers of this volume to retain without modification the opinions with reference to our subject which up to this time they have not only held but cherished. This objection, however, is not insuperable. The scientific, artistic,

or literary method of interpretation applied to that which exerts a religious influence need not necessarily destroy it. In such a case, to recognize that this influence can affect the mind only indirectly through understanding, emotion, or imagination might be a help rather than a hindrance. To go immediately to the most indisputable source of inspiration of which we know, take the utterances of that Master who spake as "never man spake" (John 7; 46). So far were his words from being like those of a philosopher formulating a system, or of a leader dictating action, that hardly two associations of men since his time have been completely agreed as to exactly what body of belief or visible organization most accurately represents Christianity as he proclaimed it, his apparent theory being that, if men came to take into their natures, as a living force, the inspiration derived from the suggestions that he gave them—from such a suggestion, for instance, as that they were sons of God—then that, both as individuals and as members of his corporate church, they could safely be left, in applying the suggestion, to exercise the "liberty" with which he had made them "free" (Gal. 5; 1). Now if this were true of the words of Jesus, why should it not be true of the words of other inspired prophets? Have any of them been more truly inspired than he was?

This argument from example may be confirmed by one based upon the nature of the conception which in religion is communicated. Significance obtained, as

it mainly is in science and largely is in art, through the conscious action of the mind, may be imparted with definiteness and accuracy to an extent not true of that which has been obtained mainly or wholly through sub-conscious action. When we speak of scientific truth as applied to a statement, we mean something that formulates the mind's conscious knowledge of every essential detail entering into the general result; we mean something that manifests no defective work of observation or of memory. When we speak of religious or even of artistic truth, of truth that is either inspirational or imaginative, it is often impossible that we should mean this; for we are speaking of something that involves certain contributions from the mind's hidden sphere of action, and because this reveals to us no form that can be perceived or even distinctly conceived, they can not be formulated. They can be merely represented or suggested. Take the following:

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world,  
 Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
 Walk under his huge legs, and peep about  
 To find ourselves dishonorable graves.

*Julius Cæsar, i., 2: Shakespeare.*

Scientifically considered, hardly one word of this is true. No man who ever lived could bestride the world like a Colossus, or have any grown man not a dwarf walk under his legs. Yet the statement is not false, because the words mean merely that certain spiritual or mental relations existing between the man and us, which rela-

tions can not be seen, are the same as those that might exist between the height that might be supposed to be seen in a Colossus and in a petty man, and that, therefore, these forms that might be seen can *suggest* this unseen relationship. Or take another illustration:

True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings,  
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.  
*Richard III, v. 2: Shakespeare.*

This again is not literally or scientifically true, but only by way of *suggestion*. Hope never had swallows' wings; and it takes a good deal more than it to make kings gods, or meaner creatures kings.

If a principle like this apply to the phraseology of art, it must apply still more to that of religion. In the Bible, God is called sometimes a sovereign whose actions are limited by only his own will (Dan. 4; 35), and sometimes a father whose actions are limited by the needs and wishes of his children (Ps. 103; 13; Matt. 7; 11); the Christ is called sometimes the only son of God (John 3; 18), and sometimes the first born among many brethren (Rom. 8; 29); and Abraham is called sometimes the father of the Israelitish race (Is. 41; 8), and sometimes of those who are not members of that race (Rom. 14; 16). Taken as illustrations used to suggest relationships in an unseen spiritual world, through what we can see and know of the relationships of king, father, son, brother, or children in a material world, these expressions may prove exceedingly helpful; but taken as statements of literal fact, they are contra-

dictory; and taken as arguments to prove exact conditions in the spiritual world, they may be very misleading. No better proof of this fact can be afforded than by the many books and sermons written by Calvinists to show that some doctrine like that of "election," "imputed righteousness," or "eternal generation" does not involve the irrational or erroneous conclusions that many have supposed, but has been misunderstood. Of course, it has been misunderstood; but might not a more thorough remedy for the misunderstanding be found by tracing it back to the extreme and erroneous literalism in which it first took rise. In order to show due regard or reverence for spiritual relationships which can only be figured or symbolized through reference to conditions in the material world, it is not necessary to ignore practically, or to deny, the plain statement in the Scriptures that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared" (1 Cor. 2; 9). "My thoughts are not your thoughts. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55; 8, 9); "Unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. 11; 33).

A similar principle applies to many Biblical expressions. The truth in them would often commend itself to us much more effectively could we perceive that they need not be interpreted literally. When, for instance,

we are informed that "The Lord spake unto Moses," or unto some other prophet, and are told the words spoken, why is it necessary for us to suppose that the term *spake* refers to words heard? Why need it indicate more than an influence exerted in an unseen, spiritual sphere *suggestive* of that which, in the material sphere, would be exerted through the use of language? We are acquainted with this method of understanding a statement, even when applied to a resemblance in conditions that are both material. A mother explains to her child that the mother-bird pushes the young birds out of her nest and *tells* them to fly; or she explains her feelings, when the child does wrong, by saying that she is *angry*. In both cases, she says what, scientifically considered, is false; yet it is strictly true—in *spirit*, as we say. And how else can we suppose the Scriptures to be true? If thus interpreted—*i.e.*, considered to be true merely in spirit—we can explain the most of their apparent discrepancies. We can explain why, for instance, we are told in Ex. 11; 1, 2, that, just before the Israelites were to leave Egypt forever, "The Lord said unto Moses . . . Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver and jewels of gold"; and are also told in Ex. 12; 35, that "the children of Israel did according to the words of Moses, and they borrowed," etc. If scientific accuracy had been the object here, we should have been informed in verse 35 that the Lord originated the idea. Fortu-



nately, we are not so informed. For this reason, when we come to consider the discrepancy indicated between what we conceive to be the character of God and the advice to do evil that good may come, we may conclude that these passages, interpreted in a literary and not a literal sense, mean no more than that Moses was inspirationally imprest with the conception that he should lead the people out of Egypt, and obtain funds for the purpose in the best way that he could, in which circumstances the natural promptings of a descendant of Jacob as well as of an enslaved race impelled him into advising the subterfuge of the false pretense of borrowing. So with the words of David and the works of Joshua. The accounts of these picture to us minds inspirationally imprest with the importance of suppressing and ending unrighteousness and idolatry. If these minds carry out the despotic and military promptings of their age, by writing imprecatory psalms and committing wholesale slaughter, such manifestations, tho suggesting the feelings and methods of the Lord, do not necessarily express them with scientific accuracy. Read Ps. 109; 1-29 and Joshua 8; 26, 27: 10; 40 and 11; 20.

When we think of all the iniquity and cruelty in family, society, and state which have resulted from the extreme literalism of the officials of ecclesiastical organizations, we can not avoid feeling that the interpretations of the Scriptures rendered possible by conceiving of all inspired expressions as mainly suggestive,

may be as much in the interest of philanthropy as of philosophy. Nevertheless, it is not supposed that all will accept these methods of interpretation. Some are so constituted that they imagine that inspired words can not be true unless they are true literally. There are some, too, who think the same of poetry. But, as was intimated a moment ago, they are not the ones who understand poetry the best or get the most truth out of it.

Before passing on now to formulate certain principles in accordance with which what has been said may be practically applied to the interpretation of the Christian Scriptures, let us, in order to approach the subject in as broad and general a way as possible, inquire first into the degrees of credibility to be given to any communications such as—are not supposed to be, but, presumably—have been proved to be given through some occult influence, or, at least, some influence exerted over the inner sphere of the mind. Let us ask how far in themselves, simply because of the methods they involve, such communications may be considered worthy of credence. To answer the question in a manner as nearly scientific as possible, let us go back to hypnotism again. Let us ask whether a man, when receiving and developing a hypnotic suggestion, is necessarily dealing with the truth? There is no need of emphasizing the importance of this question. It is relevant to all the revelations of not only what are termed heathen religions, but even of some of the non-heathen. Among

certain adherents of these, as we know, any actual proof that one has been actuated to deeds or utterances through some inner or occult influence is considered a proof also of the supernatural trustworthiness of everything that, when so influenced, he may do or say. Is there any scientific justification for this belief? Only one answer to this question accords with an intelligent understanding of the subject. That answer is, "None whatever."

Those acquainted with the phenomena of hypnotism, and, therefore, with the operations of subconsciousness as disclosed—tho not originated—by hypnotic influences, believe themselves to have reasons for holding that its processes of memory and logic are developed with well-nigh flawless consistency. When, however, from the method of development, they turn to examine the germ that is thus developed, they find that the same mind, when given suggestions entirely antagonistic in meaning, will develop each of them with equal consistency. But if this be so, why does it not follow that, in case the suggestion be untrue, and the premise therefore false, the entire result of the subconscious mental action will be false? This certainly does follow. A hypnotized man, if told that he is a bird, will act in one way; then, if told immediately afterward that he is a fish, he will act in another way, and each way will conform to his own conceptions of the mode of procedure of the being suggested. An insane man who supposes himself to be suffering from an injury inflicted

by a friend, or to be a king or an animal, acts exactly as he might act had he been permanently hypnotized. He can often remember and argue certain points with great accuracy, but he applies his ability to the development of a false premise.

Now how, in a case of hypnotism or insanity, can the truth or falsity of the premise which subconscious mentality is developing be determined? How but by some action of conscious mentality. In the hypnotized, this, though seemingly dormant, is never, probably, completely so. It usually does not manifest itself when the suggestion can be carried out passively or playfully, as in results of mere speculation and fancy. But when it comes to practical results of serious action, then the conscious mind, as if realizing that it should prevent danger to itself, is almost certain, we are told, to assert itself; then, a modest nature will not act immodestly; an innocent nature will not incur guilt. Whether we consider the theory or the practise of hypnotism, therefore, some influence from a conscious mind, as already indicated elsewhere, seems required in order to prevent the misguidance of falsehood. This mind may be that of the patient himself, if it can be partly or fully restored to its normal condition. Otherwise, the mind of another or of others surrounding the patient must decide upon the truthfulness of the premise submitted. Evidently so far as concerns the patient himself, whether hypnotized or insane, it is because, for the time being, his consciousness is not

working, that he is a victim of groundless imaginings. So much with reference to the hypnotic patient. How is it, now, with reference to one who is in a trance? Is not his consciousness, too, in a condition in which it is not working? And if so, what inference must we draw? Before answering this question let us recall that many attribute all inspiration to trance-conditions or to hypnotic conditions, which, in many of their manifestations, can not be distinguished from trance-conditions. In addition to this, let us also recall that in certain countries, as in India and in parts of Southern Europe, the insane or idiotic, for the very reason that they manifest few results of conscious intellection, are supposed to be peculiarly gifted in the direction of inspiration; and also that, in some philosophic books, insanity is allied to the subconscious intellection which is manifested in the artistic inspiration of genius. What, upon recalling all these facts, are we to conclude? Undoubtedly, that insanity, hypnotism, trance-conditions, and artistic and religious inspiration, all involve to some extent, the same form of mental action. But we need not go beyond this, and conclude that all the results of this form of mental action are similarly conditioned or are equally untrustworthy. The exact fact seems to be that their trustworthiness in each case depends upon the premise or suggestion which forms the germ from which the conscious result of the subconscious process is developed—which, by the way, is a very strong argument, as the merest tyro in logic can

recognize, for the importance of having external religious standards of belief conform as nearly as possible to such as are absolutely true. To the insane, surrounding circumstances acting upon diseased nerves, give the suggestion. To the hypnotized, the hypnotizer gives it. To the one in a trance, the persons consulting him—*i.e.*, for whom he goes into the trance—may give it. Even tho consciously they may give nothing, nevertheless they may give it in the form of general impressions, conveyed from their subconscious mental tendencies. It is this fact, indeed, that affords whatever warrant there may be for the claim of the spiritists that those who consult a "medium" with the intention of finding fraud are almost certain to find it. In such cases the "medium" is the one hypnotized, and they are the hypnotizers who furnish the suggestion. In fulfilment of the same principle, those believing strongly in Catholicism usually hear, when consulting a clairvoyant, no doctrines radically inconsistent with their general belief; or if they be Quakers, none radically inconsistent with the opinions of Penn;\* or, if they have a different experience this fact usually furnishes good evidence, that, at

\* This is not to say that they may not occasionally hear statements which they will find hard to reconcile with their beliefs: but only that, if so, they will be left to recognize the discrepancy for themselves. As bearing upon this general subject, Alfred Russel Wallace in his "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," pages 218 to 220, says that conflicting sectarian dogmas are sometimes proclaimed through the agency of "mediums"; but he claims that these are never given except avowedly as the opinions of some individual spirit, and that, notwithstanding them, the legitimate inferences concerning the future life so far as it is actually described are in all cases, as coming from all "mediums," virtually the same.



heart, they themselves are not in sympathy with their creed. Of course they may be to blame for this, but in the degree in which the creed is erroneous they must be commended; for the facts show that they are more in sympathy with truth in general than with any particular form in which they have hitherto received it. Indeed, in case a mind has ever been wrongly instructed, it is only in the degree in which it is absolutely unbiased that it can obtain from one in a trance-condition anything resembling absolute truth.

What has been said leads to the same conclusion as that reached in Chapter IV—a conclusion, however, so important that it seems well to recur to it whenever it needs to be newly applied. The conclusion is this—that whatever is received through subconscious agency is liable to be more or less modified by thoughts and feelings in some conscious mind. As has been intimated, this conscious mind may be either that of the person who is being influenced, or inspired, as we say, by or through his own subconscious intellection; or it may be the mind of another who, through the combined results of conscious and subconscious processes, may be supposed to be furnishing external suggestions to the inspired person. If the conscious mind be that of the inspired person himself, the trustworthiness of the premise which he develops will depend upon his own intellectual and spiritual attainments and character. If the conscious mind be that of another, or of others surrounding him, the trustworthiness of the

premise will depend upon their intellectual and spiritual attainments—*i.e.*, upon whether they know what truth is, and whether they desire to have it exprest with exactness.

To state this thought differently, the form of an inspired communication must depend to some extent upon the intelligence and character of the minds through which and to which it is made. It is important to notice, in addition to this, that this form may be affected by both conscious and subconscious intellection in these minds. The reason for this is that the results of conscious observation of external objects and events are constantly being stored and developed in the subconscious region, and furnishing the whole mind with its material. The conditions, therefore, seem to indicate that what may be termed the formulation of inspiration is always liable to be more or less modified, because developed under the influence of suggestions coming both from the mind of the inspired person and, sympathetically, from the minds of those to whom his communications are given. In other words, it seems to be necessary to admit the effect upon inspiration of environment, under which term we may include both the individual and the general thought of one's own age, and not only of this but of former ages of which the thought of one's own age is a result.

In these conditions we seem to find a needed explanation for those who argue—with however much or little reason it is not necessary for us, at present, to

discuss—that the earlier books of the Bible manifest in places the influences of comparatively low domestic, social, ethic, religious, and, as applied especially to accuracy, scientific and historic standards. We can attribute such facts—if we have not the ability or data to prove that they are not facts—to the environments of him through whom the religious influences were communicated. It seems, too, as if this were a more satisfactory explanation of what is called “the development of truth” in the Old and New Testaments, than is the theory that ascribes it to some plan of the Almighty such as, if carried out by a man, would involve—as some think—a form of deception. Rather than to foster such an impression, and to seem to attribute to the Creative Power limitations in morality, is it not better to attribute the result to limitations in ability? When man was given a rational intellect and a free will, to say nothing of a material body, spiritual influence over him was limited. Why is it not logical to infer that at the same time, and for the same reasons, the possibility of holding spiritual communication with him was limited? If so, whether the substance of inspiration may be supposed to come immediately from the Divine Being, or mediately through other intervening intelligences, it is hardly possible to conceive that its highest and broadest significance could be intelligible to the low and limited capacity of the human mind receiving it, or could become wholly expressible, or rendered wholly intelligible, through any effort of that mind.

To a certain extent this view must be conceded to be justifiable by a large number of very orthodox people, if they wish to be logical. Who of them deny that, in accordance with what is said in 1 Cor. 2; 14, the truth of the Scriptures must be "spiritually discerned"? But what does this mean except that the inspired element is underneath the phraseology rather than in it? Indeed, are not all the words of the phraseology, with their various suggestions, more or less the results of the thinking processes, conscious and subconscious, of the mind that happens to be the medium of the spiritual communication? "We have this treasure," says Paul, referring in 2 Cor. 4; 7, to the truth that may be supposed to be divine and absolute, "in earthen vessels." We know that the divine purposes, as they are manifested in other earthen vessels—in crystals, flowers, and animals—are not embodied with unvarying precision. Probably no diamond, rose, or human face was ever discovered that did not manifest some variation from that which science could prove to be its typical or ideal form. Now if these material objects all leave some of their material influence upon the evident divine plan to shape them in accordance with a divine law, why should not the human mind also leave some of its more powerful mental influence upon the truth which the mind receives, transmits, and, to a certain extent, interprets?

We may illustrate this subject in another way. Suppose a man to have all the subconscious requirements

for inspiration—susceptibility to the promptings of instinct, of conscience, and of sympathy—nevertheless do we not all recognize that without something in his conscious thinking to balance this, he may be entitled to have no more influence than a mere enthusiast, or even an influence as injurious as that of a fanatic? In either case, our most common comment on his efforts will probably be that he is not practical. What do we mean by this? What but that he is not able to accommodate his speech and action to existing emergencies—*i.e.*, to surrounding material conditions, to facts as discovered by investigation, and comprehended within the sphere of what we term *knowledge*? Only as that which takes its rise in the realm of spirit is correlated by a man to that which is in the realm of matter, so as to find expression through it, can he do for his fellows all that a man of intelligence should do. This is true as applied to him not only as a thinker, but as a teacher and leader of others who should think. No one can cause either himself or his neighbor to apprehend the full import of spiritual conditions whose mind is not able to do, in some degree, as did the Christ when he never spake without a parable (Mark 4; 34)—*i.e.*, without indicating a correspondence between spiritual and material conditions. Men can not fully recognize the religious connection between mercy and salvation, between faith and love, unless they can perceive them illustrated through analogies of the same in secular connections. They can not fully realize the

relations between God and man, unless they can see these relations imaged in the relations between man and man, or, if they be Christians, between the Great Master and man. Indeed, religion can not become in the highest sense rational and enlightening, unless it be led by certain ideals; and ideals are always earthly vessels with heavenly contents; outlines modeled on the lower world, filled in with light and color from the upper; figures of the actual transfigured by the potential.

What has just been said, if it be in accordance with facts, may render the statement of the truth less comprehensible and definite, but it need not render the truth itself less apprehensible and determinant. As applied to other matters, when a person urges us to a course of justice, or wisdom, or warns us of danger or folly, we have no difficulty in recognizing the truth of his appeal, notwithstanding manifestations of even great exaggeration and inaccuracy of statement, so far as concern details of emphasis and recollection. We at once separate the significance of what he has to say from that which he has formulated—*i.e.*, the spirit of his expression from the letter of it—clearly recognizing that the defects in this latter are attributable to his own mental limitations, and do not materially affect that which to him constitutes the essential part of the communication. Why should not the same principle apply to some extent at least—even tho complete investigation may show that it is never necessary to



resort to it to the extent which some imagine—to that which may be supposed to be received through the form of inspiration which is exemplified in the Christian Scriptures?

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RATIONAL METHOD OF INTERPRETING BIBLICAL STATEMENTS

Theories of Modern Biblical Critics—How to Reconcile with the Conception of Inspiration the Conception That Parts of the Bible Are Compiled from Other Writers—Scriptural Warrants for Testing by the Conscious Mind the Truth Coming Through the Subconscious—The Test Afforded by the Results of Previous Information—Of Intuitive Insight—Of Logical Inference—Application of Faith to Matters Beyond the Reach of Conscious Information, Intuition, or Inference.

If we can suppose the principles brought out at the conclusion of the chapter preceding this to be applicable to the interpretation of the Christian Bible, we shall find them affording a strictly logical method of reconciling the very highest conception of the sources of inspiration with the most advanced theories of modern Biblical critics. These theories one need not himself accept in order to recognize the importance, in view of the many who have accepted them, of showing that they do not necessitate a rejection of the authoritative character of the writings to which they apply.

One reason why the theories are sometimes supposed to necessitate this is that, according to them, many of the books of the Bible, instead of being, as was formerly supposed, consecutive and original, were compiled from different writings existing previously to

the time when they were arranged as at present. It is held, moreover, that these previous writings were not only of Hebraic origin, as indicated in such passages as Joshua 10; 13, "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" or as 1 Kings 11; 41, "And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?" but that they were often of Gentile origin. The first two chapters of the book of Genesis, for instance, are said to contain two separate accounts of the creation, in the first of which the word used for God is invariably the Hebraic equivalent for Elohim, a plural title for the Almighty adopted by the Hebrews from other languages and in the second is invariably the Hebraic equivalent for Jehovah, the peculiar title of the God of the Jews. The first of these accounts, too, is said to have been discovered among the ancient Chaldean records, tho mixed there with many childish legends and polytheistic explanations. It is claimed that the compiler of the book of Genesis reproduced this account, leaving out the legends, or at least those from which important spiritual lessons could not be drawn, and making the explanations monotheistic. Can such a claim be reconciled with a theory of inspiration that shall continue to render these books authoritative? Evidently, according to the view presented in Chapter IV, it can be. For, in the first place, according to this view, inspiration may exist among any people. The general order of creation may have been perceived by

some Chaldean seer—possibly later, with the same result, by a Hebraic—in the manner suggested in the note at the bottom of this page;\* and if so, there would be truth in the general outlines. But, in the second place, according to this view, wherever inspiration exists, the conscious thinking of the seer or interpreter is apt to modify it. This fact may account for any number of additions, mythologic or polytheistic, made to the inspired matter either by the Chaldean seers themselves, or by the writers who handed down their utterances. But the same fact may also account for the omission of myths, and the substitution of the monotheistic theory, on the part of the Hebraic com-

\* William Denton, who was at one time the State Geologist of Massachusetts, in his book entitled "The Soul of Things," gives accounts of hundreds of experiments in what he calls psychometry. In this the subconscious mind seems to derive a suggestion from a material object, and to be influenced to make explorations into its story in a manner somewhat analogous to that in which the mind of the physician mentioned on page 65 explores the distant. Professor Denton found that certain persons were what he termed "sensitives." Into the hands of these he would place a particular object without informing them about it; and they would then describe it and give its history. For instance, he would put lava into the hands of a child ignorant of its character, and this child would describe the whole process of its formation from a volcano. The author of this book has placed letters in the hands of persons of this kind, who, without opening them, have not only determined their contents, but have accurately described the characters of their writers and the localities from which the letters were sent. One of these persons is said to have described in this manner the experience of a nail, all the way from the mine, whence its iron was taken, through its voyages in a battleship to a sea-fight. It seems useless to argue any question with one who denies that a knowledge of the existence of such methods of mental action does not materially assist the mind in conceiving how the series of pictures in the first chapter of Genesis, describing successive stages in the creation of the world, which no man could ever have seen, might have been composed. Nor does it lessen, but increase a true conception of divine inspiration, to find some way, as in this case, of making its possibilities more comprehensible. When the divine mind works through human agency, it is not only appropriate for us, but incumbent upon us as rational beings, to try to ascertain the methods of this agency.

pilars. We all know that certain minds, when a complicated mixture of fact and fiction is presented to them, manifest peculiar facility in separating the one from the other, and bringing to light the truth. Most of us feel, too, if we do not know, that such minds reach their conclusions through work that is not done wholly in the region of consciousness. They reach them intuitively, as we say, which is the same as to attribute them in part to the mental processes that are hidden. If, in the selection and arrangement of written records, these mental processes took place in the mind of one in thorough sympathy with the Source of all truth, and while developing suggestions derived from this Source, why might not the result conform completely to that which is demanded in inspiration? Why should there be any greater difficulty in ascribing inspiration to the selection and arrangement of prehistoric matter, as in the book of Genesis, than of historic matter, as in the books of the Kings? And, once more, going back to the main proposition advanced in this chapter, why should we not suppose that, in this prehistoric matter itself, there should be certain results of inspiration which, when selected and arranged by the inspired compiler, would have just as much authority as could be assigned to original documents?

We are now prepared to say that, in trying to ascertain the character of the truth of inspiration, it seems rational to carry out the principle already suggested on page 100. Intelligently interpreted, the expres-

sions, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11; 28). "An evil generation . . . seek a sign" (Luke 11; 29), and "Believe not every spirit," even tho it be a spirit, "but try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4; 1), can have but one meaning; and this is that men should test a statement, even tho coming from an acknowledged spiritual source, precisely as they would a statement coming from any other source. And how would they test this? Mainly, it may be said, in three ways: by its conformity to the results in consciousness—first, of previous information; second, of intuitive insight, and, third, of logical inference, as determined according to the laws of evidence and of argument. In the Scriptures, all three methods are recognized as legitimate.

Here is what is said of the first of them: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John 2; 24). "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8; 20). "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life. And they are they which testify of me (John 5; 39). "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2; 1). "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so" (Acts 17; 11). Compare also John 15; 3 and 17; 17: 2 Tim. 3; 15:



Deut. 11; 18, 19: Jos. 1; 8: Rom. 15; 4: 2 Peter 1; 19, etc. The general principle underlying such injunctions is almost self-evident. It is this: The individual has time to discover and develop comparatively little; he must avail himself of that which, through revelation or reflection, has been attained by others who may be considered to have been, on the whole, accurate in their observations, honest in their convictions, candid in their representations, and wise in their conclusions. In a general way, this may be said to necessitate every one's having what may be termed intellectual charity. Exercised toward the beliefs of his ancestors, and in an ecclesiastical direction, this charity might make a man a churchman, and zealous in training the young in the tenets of his church; but, at the same time, exercised toward the beliefs of strangers or of adherents of other sects or religions, the two methods of testing truth yet to be considered would, of themselves, cause him to recognize mental rights to a sufficient extent to keep him from being a bigot. But some may ask how, if we apply the first test, can we also apply the second and third tests; in other words, how can one let that "abide" in him which he has "heard from the beginning," and yet, while doing this, not surrender his individual exercise of intuitive insight, or logical inference? In this way, as it seems: According to what was said on page 152, that which is received from without the mind, when left to take its natural course—*i.e.*, when left to influence one's spirit

in the way in which nature has provided that the spirit should be influenced—sinks into the region of unconsciousness. Here, digested, so to speak, by the mind, and incorporated into its working organism, the importations from without become a part of the sub-conscious possessions, giving inevitable bias to each prompting that emerges into consciousness. For this reason they may be said to be constantly operative in the mind. But they are not operative in any such way as to interfere with the conscious freedom of the mind, whether exercised in forming judgments or in drawing conclusions. In Chapter XII it will be shown that a man of faith is one who is governed by his subjective promptings, and, in this sense, by that which has been “heard from the beginning,” and which gives bias to these; but, at the same time, it will be shown that he must exercise the conscious powers of his mind fully as much as others who have no faith. His mind works differently from theirs solely in being “not disobedient unto the heavenly vision” (Acts 26; 19), in giving not only due, but chief consideration to the spiritual side of life—to motives that come from the realm within, from the ideal; whereas the others do not give these the chief consideration, being influenced almost exclusively from the material side of life, from that which is outward and real. The great religious leaders—Augustine and Luther not only, but Jesus as well—have been characterized not by any neglect of the results of intuitive insight or of logical inference,

but by a conscientious endeavor to subordinate or conform these to that which has been "heard from the beginning." They have sought to develop this latter, and not to destroy it. They have been conservative as well as progressive. They have tried to graft the new upon the old, and thus to reform rather than to revolutionize. If we grasp this conception of the subject, we shall perceive that an application of the test that we have been considering need not interfere with an application of the tests that are to follow. The most conscientious and conservative mind, when working normally, can be governed by that which has "been heard from the beginning," and yet be influenced not by precept but by principle, and being so, can carry this latter out not according to the letter but according to the spirit, and therefore so as not in any sense to make the "word of God," communicated in any other way, "of none effect through" mere "tradition" (Mark 7; 13).

This last quotation may well introduce the second test of truth mentioned on page 162, namely, that afforded by the conformity of results to those of intuitive insight. "Blessed are they," said Jesus (Luke 11; 28), "that hear the word of God and keep it"—*i.e.*, without any other evidence. "An evil generation . . . seek a sign" (Luke 11; 29); and the method of the apostles is said to have been "by manifestation of the truth commending" themselves "to every man's conscience" (2 Cor. 4; 2). The idea here seems to be that truth

can be determined at times by its own inherent quality. Indeed, for other reasons, one might almost be justified in holding a theory that a mind working normally should recognize the difference between truth and error as inevitably as a tongue recognizes the difference between the sweet and the bitter. Of course, the trustworthiness of this theory can never be fully tested, because, as a fact, the mind seldom or never does work normally. Consciously or unconsciously, it is constantly under the influence of false standards of thought and action, causing false conceptions of what causes truth to be of authority, and mistaken endeavors to make the information freshly presented conform to falsehood already accepted. Notwithstanding this, it is probably a fact that absolute truth is attained mainly in the degree in which men who lead the world to the appreciation and application of new phases of the truth, as well as the followers of such men, are largely inclined to judge of it intuitively; and that no other method, if conscientiously applied, can so well preserve men in times of either religious decline or progress from too great retrogression on the one hand or precipitancy on the other.

The third test of truth was said to be conformity to the results of logical inference or reasoning. "Let us reason together," says Isaiah in Is. 1; 18; let us give a "reasonable service," urges Paul in Rom. 12; 1. A result may be rendered reasonable in many different ways—chiefly, perhaps, by being made to fulfil the

laws of argument or of evidence, as applied either to the substance of an utterance, or to the character of its utterer, as manifested in either his words or his actions. "Believe me," said Jesus to Philip, ". . . or else believe me for the very work's sake" (John 14; 11). But to whatever this test of logical inference may be applied, it is a test which the mind is always ready to assume that it has a right to apply. Who ever heard a sermon in the most bigoted of sects the whole object of which was not to show the accordance of some statement in a text with not only the previous information of the audience concerning its subject or other subjects, and with the intuitive promptings of conscience, but also with conclusions logically deducible from an examination of testimony and argument?

But if we may judge of truth according to these last two tests, some one may ask what are we to do with inspired statements to which neither test can be applied, with statements concerning matters beyond the reach of human insight or reasoning, with statements which have to be accepted upon faith? The answer is that one holding the theory just presented would have to accept such statements for the same reason that causes any one else to accept them (see page 314). The strongest argument in favor of them is that the matters to which such statements refer form a part of a general system of belief, and that a system which can be proved to be true as a whole must be true in its parts; and the force of this argument can not be lessened by

anything that has been said here. There is every reason to believe that the three tests that have been indicated, when applied to Scriptural truth, will prove it abundantly able of itself to maintain any authority that it may need



## CHAPTER VIII

### ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST INTERPRETING BIBLICAL STATEMENTS AS SUGGESTIVE AND NOT DICTATORIAL

The View Presented in the Preceding Chapter Seems to Subject the Truth of God to the Judgment of Man—This Method in Analogy with Other Ways in Which Man is Expected to Interpret Divine Truth—Nature and Experience Influence Him so as to Cultivate His Power of Acting Rationally—Effect of This Upon the Young—We Should Expect the Same Method to Be Pursued in Revelation : Impossibility of Any Other Method Except the Suggestive in Communicating Spiritual Truth—The Error of Interpreting the Scriptures Literally.

All the objections that can be brought against the line of thought just presented may be resolved, in the last analysis, into one, namely, that it seems to submit, and even to subject, that which is supposed to be divine truth to the tests of human judgment, and this the judgment not merely of a collection of men, but often of an individual. It is argued that to allow each man to determine independently the application of divine truth to himself and to those for whom he is responsible is equivalent to claiming that he can get along without any divine guidance whatsoever. Indeed, some go so far as to insinuate that if one be left to make out of the Bible what he chooses, he is no better off than if he had no Bible. A little reflection, however, will reveal that such inferences are not strictly deducible from the premises. It is not logical

to conclude from what has been said that a man can get out of the Bible what he chooses, but only what he thinks; and a Bible which is made a source of thought may impart a great deal, even tho accepted suggestively rather than dictatorially. Besides this, on account of the influence always exerted from the divine source of life over the mind, especially that part of it which includes the subconscious, a man, even if left to himself, is not left without something impelling him, and this in a very unmistakable manner, to construe the truth submitted to his judgment in accordance with the divine intention. The very fact that one is created with the possibility of eyesight and given light causes him to be guided by the Creator, even tho in addition to this he feel no hand leading him. In the same way, the very fact that he is created with the possibilities of subconscious mentality, not to say morality, and given suggestions, causes him to be guided by the Creator, even tho in addition he hear no word of explicit command.

Whatever may be said against the method of accepting the Scriptures advanced in the preceding chapter, this method is in analogy with those that we are obliged to pursue when accepting any truth that the Divine Being imparts in any other way. There is many a lesson taught by nature; but we are forced to study hard in order to learn it; and, even then, we are not always certain that we have learned it aright. Meantime, however, we have learned enough—if not

to satisfy our desire for knowledge—at least to secure our physical safety. As will be shown presently, this is exactly paralleled by what every man can learn from the Scriptures with reference to that which can secure his spiritual safety. Again, in connection with the suggestive character of divine revelation as imparted through nature, the human mind has been so influenced that every mental factor that is of real value in human progress has been stimulated to the full. If man had not been left to find out many truths, which are not revealed in nature but merely suggested, humanity would never have known such developments as are indicated by the words philosophy, science, and history. The same is true with reference to the revelations in the Scriptures. Think how the world of thought would be impoverished if it could be possible to eliminate from our libraries not only all our theological works, but all the essays, poems, and novels written in order to advocate or oppose certain peculiar interpretations of vague and doubtful passages of Scripture! How, too, would the world of achievement be impoverished, could we eliminate from it the results, in philanthropy and missionary enterprise, which have been due to organized efforts to emphasize one or another of these possible interpretations!

But how about the individual? it may be asked. Is he to be left to be the slave of his own lack of intelligence and judgment? There is but one answer to this—he certainly should be left in this condition,

unless his own reason tell him that it is wiser for him to be guided by those who have learned more, and have thought more, than he himself has. Fortunately, reason, wherever it is followed, usually does tell most men exactly this. So far as it does not tell them this, one can not easily perceive upon what ground it can be argued that they are under obligation to surrender their own mental rights; especially in view of the fact that, by not doing so, they are really increasing their ability to exercise these? If there be any solution for the most important problem which life presents to all of us; if there be anything that explains what existence on earth is intended to do for a man, the solution, so far as it can be indicated by the facts of experience, must be this—that life is designed to train a rational creature to act rationally—by which latter word is meant here to act in accordance not merely with the highest intellectual, but also with the highest emotional and spiritual motives. No one can consider for any length of time the conditions to which a man is subjected on earth without recognizing that, in order to do right, he must always make a rational choice between alternatives. Moreover, as if all the conditions were arranged so as to force him to exercise this choice, he must always make it between alternatives of such a nature that either of them, if allowed to influence his action without his making a choice, would necessitate his doing wrong. For instance, take one of the primary obligations of religious practise: a man, it is said,

should be self-sacrificing and generous. But how? If saving nothing, he give away all that he has, he will impoverish himself to such an extent as to become not only a public nuisance but a public burden. Even if, like the so-styled "holy men" of India, he do not walk the streets naked, and beg, he will, at least, oblige others to work for him, and, possibly, tax themselves in order to build a poor-house in which he may find board and lodging. On the other hand, if he become a miser and save everything, he will enrich himself at the expense of the community, and become an equal nuisance and burden, because contributing nothing to the general welfare. What can he do? It is usually impossible that any one should tell him this, because no one can know all the demands that circumstances and conscience may make upon him. It is impossible that he should do exactly right, therefore, except so far as he exercises his own reason, and makes a wise choice between giving too much and too little. Exactly the same sort of choice must be exercised with reference to every question that presents itself for practical solution. In no methods of pastime or of business, of entertainment or of philanthropy, of feasting or of exhorting, of dancing or of praying, of manifesting loyalty to a political party or to a church of which he is a member, can a man do right merely by following the advice or dictation of others. There come times when it is essential that he should make for himself a rational choice between extremes.

How almost every earnest young person between fifteen and twenty-five years of age suffers because of this obligation! Just as he becomes free from the dictation of parents or teachers, how he longs—often unconscious of the reason why—for some other person to take their places and tell him exactly what is or is not right! This feeling explains why so many, at this age, rush into churches, or orders, which claim it to be the first duty of mind to submit to the authority of others. But is it wise or right for reason, in this way, to rid itself of its responsibilities? Certainly not, if the object of life be to train one to use his reason. Certainly not if, by missing this training, one miss the development which he was sent into the world to secure. Nor, however much of the effects of training or development he may avoid by such a course, can he ever escape wholly from the responsibility that he seeks to shirk. His mind may become that of a bigot, too weighted on one side by authority to think with balance, or that of a fanatic, too excited or affrighted by the same to think with sequence; nevertheless there will come times when he must think, and think for himself—times when he is reading in private his Bible or his ritual—times when he is dealing in private with his servant or his fellow. Is it not inevitable that, at such times, the reason that has been so treated as to form a habit of not acting at all, or of not acting normally, will come to one decision, and the reason that has not been so treated will come to another decision? If



so, which decision of the two is likely to be more in accord with the laws of nature, material or spiritual, human or divine?—that given by the reason which has been artificially sheltered like a grown man always kept in a nursery?—or by the reason which the influences naturally exerted upon life in the world have, according to methods divinely designed, brought to the condition that must have been intended?

Besides what has just been said, however, and the very logical conclusion that may be drawn from it, which is that the same method of divine influence which is exerted upon reason through nature and experience should be exerted upon reason when coming also through the mediumship of the inspired Scriptures, a deeper consideration needs to be noticed before one can apprehend fully why spiritual truth is not communicated through explicit statements. This consideration is that, to communicate it thus would be intrinsically impossible. How could men accustomed to only material conditions be made to understand the nature of spiritual conditions except by way of suggestion? The common sense at the basis of this question ought to reveal itself even to the advocates of the view opposed to the one here presented, if, for no other reason, because they all profess strenuously to believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible. What does this book say on the subject? (Is. 55; 8, 9) "My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than

the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways"; or, to quote again from 1 Cor. 2; 9, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Those of us who prefer to interpret these passages as we do others—*i.e.*, by the aid of reason—will recall that the experiences of mind—which, if not a part of those of spirit, are, at least, the ones most resembling the experiences of spirit—are never manifested through our material body by anything that, in the least, resembles themselves. In the seven volumes on "Comparative Esthetics" written by the author of this book, innumerable illustrations are given of methods of representing—and representing very unmistakably, too—certain thoughts and emotions which, because of being experienced only in the inaudible and invisible mind, need, in order to be made known to others, to be translated, as it were, into forms that can be seen or heard. It is pointed out, however, that, in no instance is the representing sight or sound at all like the mental experience which is represented. There is no resemblance, for instance, between a questioning attitude of mind and an upward inflection; or between a threatening attitude and a contracted fist. So we could go through the whole list of thoughts and emotions made known through some form of natural or of artistic expression, as in music, poetry, painting, sculpture, or architecture, and, tho we might find all of them represented suggestively, we could find none of them

presented exactly as they are. If this be so, and if it illustrate, as presumably it does, a universal fact with reference to the degree in which the spiritual can be communicated through the material, how mistaken must he be who acts upon the theory that the Scriptures should or can be understood literally? We can probably understand and interpret them thus to some extent. Almost every word, which originally had more or less of a figurative or merely representative meaning, becomes apparently literal when it comes to be used conventionally with only one meaning. But when we consider such words, phrases, and prolonged descriptions of the Scriptures as attempt to describe conditions that can never come to be conventionally understood because they have never and can never be experienced or conceived by mortals, we would better be humble, and gratefully accept what is revealed to us upon the hypothesis that it is merely suggestive. It is one thing to believe that we can derive from the Scriptures that which is sufficient to secure our individual salvation—all must believe this or else believe the author of them a deceiver—it is an entirely different thing to believe that we may be made to receive from them anything more than very vague intimations of those mysteries which it is impossible to have explained in terms of this world.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHRISTIAN DOGMATISM AS AFFECTED BY CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL TRUTH SUGGESTIVE

Conclusions Reached in Preceding Chapter—Confirmation of These Afforded by the Scriptures—These Conclusions Are Not Accepted by Christians in General—Deleterious Effects of This Manifested in Diminished Attendance Upon Church Services—The Church Should Remedy This Condition—Origin of Dogmatism, Intolerance, and the Dark Ages—Dogmatism and Intolerance as Irrational as Uncharitable—Creeds Should Not Be Made a Test of Christian Character—Applied to the Doctrine of Inspiration—Injurious Effects of Applying Such a Test in Connection with This Doctrine—Same Principle Exemplified with Reference to the Doctrine of the Personality of God—The Trinity—The Immaculate Conception and Incarnation—The Method of Salvation—The Problem in Salvation—Its Solution in the Work of the Christ—How Dogmatism, Tho Based Upon This Solution, Does Harm—Not Only Among Christians, but Non-Christians, as Buddhists and Mohammedans—Same Principle Applied to Doctrine of Eternal Punishment—Certainty with Reference to Spiritual Truth Not Justifiable—Illustration of the Practical Evils of This Attitude.

In accordance with what was said in the preceding chapter, it seems neither best nor possible for sacred writings to give expression to truth in any other way than by that of suggestion—not best because of what is required for the development of reason in man; and not possible because of the essential differences between the spiritual and the material, which latter furnishes the only means in this world of enabling us to interpret that which issues from the former.

A very slight examination of the history of the

effects of any sacred writings will confirm this conception of the character of their influence. As was said in the Introduction, sacred writings such as the Vedas, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran, and the Bible are all differently interpreted by different groups of readers. "There are sixty distinct sects of Buddhists in Japan," said a Japanese priest to the author; and, as we all know, there are almost as many different Christian sects in America and England. Yet Quakers and Romanists, Unitarians and Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Universalists, Baptists and Christian Scientists, are all equally ready to argue that their peculiar tenets and forms are those that most accurately represent the truth as exprest in one and the same Bible. No additional fact is needed in order to prove that, in the text which presents this truth, it is exprest suggestively, not explicitly. If exprest in the latter form, rational minds, when studying it, could not draw from it so many divergent conclusions.

Nevertheless, a large number of people seem to think otherwise. As applied to Christians, at least, the majority seem to believe in their hearts, even when they try to be the most charitable, that what is termed Scriptural truth is something which can be exprest explicitly, and that no one can be a Christian in reality unless, consciously or unconsciously, he has accepted it as thus exprest. One would naturally think that the practical result of such a belief—and the belief itself is held because this is thought to be its practical result

—would be to cause those influenced by it to unite in accepting the Biblical phraseology as it is. But, strange to say, the contrary is true. The actual practical result is to cause the acceptance of the Biblical phraseology only so far as it has been interpreted in creeds, rituals, and hymns prepared by theologians and others who, as a rule, are acknowledged not to have been inspired. These persons, acting in accordance with what they suppose to be the requirements of the human mind, think that they can make the truth of inspiration more effective by rendering it more explicit. But this is an end that they can not attain without adding to the Biblical phraseology very much that is originated by themselves. The very nature of that which they are undertaking to do necessitates this. In other words, the natural effect of their efforts at times is to take from Scriptural truth the suggestive and inspiring quality which furnishes the foremost proof of its spiritual origin. Moreover, after they have substituted, so far as they can, materially explicit statements in place of those that are spiritually suggestive, there is nothing left for them logically but to expect men to receive their products in the only way in which explicit statements can be received—*i.e.*, explicitly or dogmatically. Having supposed this, the next logical step is to try to compel acceptance of these through means, as indicated in Chapter X, other than those legitimate to an appeal to the thinking faculties alone.



If this supplanting of the expressions of inspiration by those of theology, and this compelling of an acceptance of the latter through physical, moral, social, national, or any other kind of force, be erroneous, we should expect the results to make this fact clear? Do they? One is not unwarranted in giving to this question an answer most emphatically affirmative. Some months ago, the author heard it stated from a London pulpit that the churches of that city, including Sunday-schools, are attended by four-fifths of the children, but by only one-fifth of the adult population. The statement set him to thinking. He concluded that this condition must be owing to the fact that certain methods used by the Church appeal more effectively to children—or are supposed by their guardians to do this—than they appeal to their elders. Can this be so; and if it be so, what are these methods? So far as concerns their general character, they must, of course, be such as are used to influence sentiment and conduct through first influencing thought. Does the Church use any methods of influencing thought which, owing to their nature, are effective with the young, and are not effective with the grown? A moment's reflection will convince us that such methods are used; and will reveal to us also what they are. A child is obliged, and therefore is accustomed, to have others think for him. A man is obliged, and therefore is accustomed, to think for himself. As a consequence, the child, when he goes to church, naturally accepts what has been thought out

for him by others. The man does not naturally do this. There has been a change in the demands of his mind. Yet the Church has not changed its methods—*i.e.*, not essentially. It gives the man less teaching and more preaching; but often in the latter, and almost always in its confessions, rituals, and hymns, there are implications that his first duty is to accept the results of the thinking of others. Does not this fact account for the absence from Church of large numbers, especially in cases in which, as often happens, they are so exceptionally serious in their characters that their lack of interest in it can not rightly be ascribed to any constitutional or acquired lack of interest in that which makes for the general welfare? Is it strange that some of these appear to the author, at least, to be honest when they argue that they ought not to seem to sanction, even by their presence, gatherings in which their most clearly God-given rights are ignored, if not denied?

The arguments through which a man reaches such conclusions may be fallacious. But is it not the duty of the Church to remove, as fully as possible, the grounds on which they are based? In the Middle Ages, when few were educated, or allowed to choose their own ways of work or of government, or their own employers or rulers, the present traditional methods of the Church and of its officials accorded with those of other contemporary institutions. But is it so to-day? If not, the sooner the fact is recognized, the better. Can it be recognized in such ways as to preserve the Church's

essential character? Can sufficient truth to attain the ends of the Christian system be held and communicated in such ways as to allow every spiritually minded man the right to think for himself? Or—to express the thought in another form—can we, in order to meet the exigencies of our own day, carry out the principles underlying the Protestant Reformation to their logical conclusions and make the reform complete? We certainly can, if there be sufficient warrant for accepting the theory presented in the previous chapters of this book. We can not, if obliged to accept the theory held by most of the churches of our time to the effect that Christian truth—*i.e.*, the truth which must be accepted by all whose intellectual opinions can be termed Christian—can be, and has been, exprest in explicit formulas which men have prepared in order to interpret it. The reasons for these two statements are evident. The theory that truth can be sufficiently exprest when left indefinite and suggestive, necessarily carries with it the inference that a man's thought can be stimulated in its sources so as to move toward the right, even when left free to develop itself according to the dictates of his own intelligence. The theory that truth must be exprest definitely and explicitly necessarily carries with it the opposite inference, namely, that a man's thought will not move toward the right unless it be developed in accordance with the dominating influence of some external constraint.

Let us consider, for a little, this latter, which may be

said to be the theory most prevalent at present; and, first, something with reference to its origin. Concerning this, ecclesiastical history does not leave us in doubt. Creeds originated in the efforts of men to obviate the supposed evils arising from the differences of opinion natural to the human mind. After the death of Jesus, the apostles and their followers began to think about that which he had said to them. This was right on their part. It was doing that for which their minds had been made. But, after a little, some of them began to fear that certain logical conclusions drawn by others would prove detrimental to the Christian system. What then? How should this condition have been met? Wrong thinking should have been corrected—not so?—by right thinking. The only rational way in which to treat one who questions truth is to try to have him answered. This seems to have been the method at first adopted in the Church. When the Apostle Peter made the mistake—shown by the history of the Church to have been a mistake—of supposing that all Gentiles becoming Christians should be circumcised—*i.e.*, should first become Jews—the Apostle Paul says (Gal. 2; 7-21), “I withstood him, to the face,” and then quotes the arguments that he used. Later, however, Christians changed their methods. Instead of trying to convert, they adopted the thoroughly human method of trying to compel their antagonists. Those with one opinion claimed to be the only genuine Christians, and excommunicated those with other opinions.

At first the former merely refused to have dealings with the latter; but this meant much in an age when already few pagans had dealings with Christians. A century or so later, when certain of those associated with one or another Christian body attained political power, this power was used against its opponents. Finally, after two or three more centuries, those whose opinions happened to be reenforced by the weapons of civil authority succeeded in silencing, through persecution, most of those inclined to think for themselves, as well as in accustoming almost all others not to think at all. Then, for well-nigh eight centuries, the world had experience of the Dark Ages.

It is humiliating to some of us, but it is a fact, that these were owing not to paganism so much as to the form of Christianity that then prevailed. We can recognize, now, that the methods of the latter were as irrational as they were uncharitable, excusable, if at all, on no other ground than that of the limited mental and social experience of the ecclesiastical officials. External pressure can no more turn the current of a man's thought than a hand can turn the course of the wind; nor would it be possible in any church for a sinner, if first induced to believe it to be a sin to follow his own convictions, to be converted from the error of his ways, no matter how thoroughly he might feel convinced of it. The Reformation brought a change, but not a complete one. Many still believe that truth can be communicated through force—not through physical force



necessarily—in most countries sects are now allowed—but through moral, social, or national force—force which excludes a man, because he differs from others in religious opinion, from their circles or privileges in ecclesiastical, domestic, or political life.

This book has not been written to show that any one of these creeds is true or untrue, but to show that the use of all is unwise, so far as they are employed as tests to indicate who is or is not a Christian. This is so because the indefinite expressions of the Scriptures which the creeds seek to render definite are just what are needed for the practical influence which Christianity is intended to have upon the minds and lives of men in general. In order to show this, let us look at certain subjects of thought which the Scriptures present indefinitely and the creeds definitely.

It is natural to begin with what the Scriptures say of themselves—*i.e.*, with what is called the doctrine of inspiration. With reference to this as to other subjects, some Biblical passages seem to be explicit. For instance; we read in Rev. 22; 18, “I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book,” and a like imprecation upon him who “Shall take away from the words.” It is by no means certain, however, that these statements refer to any but the Book of the Revelation, or that, if they refer to the whole Bible, they are applicable to anything more than to the pro-



duction, by addition or subtraction, of spurious Scripture—of that which is represented to be inspired when it is known not to be so. In view of the interests involved, most of us probably would agree that the punishment threatened the author of this is not too great. The most unequivocal statement with reference to inspiration in the Bible is in 2 Timothy, 3; 16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Is there any one who believes in any form of divine inspiration who can not accept this statement exactly as it stands? But human minds are so constituted that, the moment such a passage is read, they begin to speculate about it. They ask how does the inspiration of the Bible differ from other forms of inspiration, as in the so-called false religions, or in religious or secular poetry? They ask what is the method of the inspiration—is it accomplished through divine superintendence, or direction, or suggestion?—when a man is in a normal or in an elevated condition of mind?—with his powers acting consciously or unconsciously? Or they ask what is the extent of the inspiration? Does it apply to the statements of physical or historical facts?—or only to the subjects which these facts illustrate, with the precepts that accompany them?—to the style and the words, or only to the substance and the sense? As long as minds exist, men who use them properly can not avoid arguing such questions, and adhering to the conclusions to which

their arguments seem logically to lead. But are they justified in making the acceptance of their own conclusions a test of orthodoxy—of that which a man, if a Christian, should believe? Does not the very fact that they are *conclusions* prove that they can not be reached except by one whose mind has passed through the processes through which they were reached by the first who proclaimed them? If so, such conclusions can be communicated only through argument. They can not be communicated through authority or force, physical or moral. For any church to attempt to communicate them thus is to attempt the impossible. It may, indeed, secure outward assent, but to try to obtain this from those who can not give inward consent is to try to habituate large numbers of such as can not avoid thinking for themselves to lip-service and hypocrisy.

But how about the effect of such methods upon those who do not think for themselves, or, at least, not sufficiently to study the subject? Strange as it may seem, the methods when used with these appear to have no influence at all, or else one that is harmful. Children need theories with reference to inspiration no more than with reference to other things. Grown people, whatever they may be told, are really influenced by inspiration only so far as it inspires. With them anything inspiring through a material agency, like a word, owes its influence to the fact that the statement which appeals to the outward material sense appeals also to the inward mental sense. As the Bible says, “the

things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2; 14); "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" (Rom. 8; 16). If anything in the Bible fail to appeal to this inward sense, a man may declare and fancy that he believes it inspired, but it does not affect him as if it were so. For instance, few of us, probably, have ever known any man—no matter how orthodox his views upon inspiration—who, merely because of certain passages in the imprecatory psalms, was influenced to believe that vindictiveness and revenge are right. In some way, unconsciously to himself, he has seemed to recognize that to accept the apparent meaning in these cases would involve a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the mind of the Spirit. On the contrary, few of us, probably, have ever known any one—no matter how unorthodox his views upon inspiration—whose spirit has not at once yielded assent to most of the ideals express in the precepts and embodied in the life of Jesus. The truth seems to be that the Spirit does not need the dictating of human teachers robed in the gowns of theologians to the extent that some suppose, being abundantly self-sufficient when appealing to the human spirit without their aid. Nor when the book of God is in the hands of the people is it necessary to affirm that all who are to be rightly influenced by it must accept every phrase of it as infallibly correct, literally as well as suggestively. To say this is to assert what few honest men can investigate long enough to be certain that they

believe, and what very many must reject because the surface-facts do not seem to sustain it. Even if such men accept the theory nominally, they can not accept it as a result of their own thinking, and therefore not rationally. Anything accepted not rationally is accepted irrationally, and if, at the same time, it be revered, it is accepted superstitiously. Even thus accepted, the Bible may still appeal to reason in part, because it is full of thought; but it will appeal in part also to the irrational, and therefore have something of the same demoralizing influence—tho, perhaps, almost infinitely less in degree—as is exerted on the pagan by his fetish.

Now let us pass on to the doctrine of the personality of God. As all know, many make much of this, arguing it from the innumerable passages in the Scriptures in which the personal pronoun is used in addressing the Divine Being and in speaking of him. Besides this, it is argued that not to recognize his personality lessens one's sense of his Fatherhood and sympathy, as well as of dependence upon him and responsibility to him. There is no doubt about the force of these arguments, or of any man's right to present them to others. But how about influencing one to accept the results of the arguments by making them a test of religious character and eligibility for church-membership? There are those whose conceptions of God are best exprest in language like this: "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17; 28); "Whither shall I go

from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Ps. 139; 8, 9), and "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3; 8). Some who hold such conceptions find it difficult to reconcile them with the limitations which seem necessary for personality. Who can say that their views introduce into thought an element of mystery greater than the circumstances warrant? Who can say that this mystery seems too great to allow their minds to receive truth sufficient for the practical purposes of Christianity? To think that God can not be limited as in personality is not the same as to think that, through imagination, the same Being can not experience what personality is, or, through inspiration and incarnation, represent it to human beings. If what is conceived of Him be inclusive of all that personality might be or do, what more is necessary? Besides this, is it not possible for a too narrow conception of divinity to do harm? What else can be affirmed of theories attributing to God the passions and motives of human beings; or of theories tending toward deism—*i.e.*, the conception of a God existing apart from nature, physical or human; or tending toward idolatry; *i.e.*, the conception of a God existing in a part of nature, as in a picture once seen over a shrine in southern Germany? It represented Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, and under it was inscribed, "The Trinity."

Let us take up, now, this doctrine of the Trinity, including that of the nature of the Christ. The only passage in the Bible explicitly affirming the doctrine is the one in 1 John, 5; 7: "For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Without exception, it is said, the best scholars admit that this passage is an interpolation. It is not in the original text. This fact, however, does not disprove the doctrine, but merely removes it from the sphere of explicit statement to that of suggestion. The suggestion is derived from observing that, in the Bible, the personal pronoun is used when quoting, addressing, or mentioning each of the three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that each is reported as influencing, through word or deed, each of the others. Besides this, certain philosophers, noticeably, in our day, those of the Hegelian school, argue the impossibility of conceiving of a deity except as conscious of self, of non-self, and of a connection between these two, which, interpreted in terms of theology, means God in the spiritual, or the Father, God in the natural, or the Son, and God in the connection between the two, or the Holy Ghost. See also what is said on this subject on page 129. But however Scriptural or logical such conclusions may be, few men are exegetes or philosophers. Why need the Church insist upon having all accept their conclusions? There certainly are reasons why some should, at least, hesitate to do so. The word *person*,



as applied to a member of the Trinity, does not mean exactly the same as when applied to an earthly being; and a man who recognizes something inexact in the word may be merely trying to be true to the operations of his own mind. Moreover, the word *unity*, as applied to the Trinity, does not mean exactly the same as when applied in material relations. At most, it can mean only spiritual unity. But what is spiritual unity? No human being can comprehend this. He can merely apprehend what it may be through using an illustration from analogy. If it were possible for several human beings to think, feel, and will alike, we should say that they were animated by unity of spirit. But some one reminds us that this is not a fair illustration, because the unity of the Godhead is supposed to be organic. What then? There are those who suppose that, owing to subtle conditions existing in the occult sphere, all spiritual union, even that between men, is organic. But this supposition can not be proved. No; neither can the supposition with reference to the method of the unity of the Godhead. So long as the general fact of Spiritual unity is admitted, need—not does, but need—the doctrine of the Trinity mean more than this? Is anything more demanded to cause men to recognize all that is claimed of the Christ as representing the character of God in his dealings with men, or all that is claimed of the influence of the Spirit as coming from God? Of course some will argue—and, if they believe it, should argue—that more is demanded;

but does this justify them in forcing conviction, in or out of the Church, through modes of influence other than arguments? Few in the churches have any clear view of the meaning of the Trinity; and the endeavor to demand of men a clear view has done much harm, not only to those whom it has kept out of the churches, and of all connection with Christianity, but to many who, after joining Christian churches, have found themselves doubting their creed. Besides this, the emphasis given the doctrine has been harmful on account of false conclusions drawn from it. Theologians tell us that this emphasis does not interfere with the acceptance of the doctrine of the humanity of the Christ; but practically it does. The Mass suggests less fellowship with men than did his Last Supper. Again, notice the following in the prayer of the Christ for his disciples (John 17; 21) "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us"; and again, in verse 22, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one." How can this prayer be well explained so long as a church so emphasizes the unity of the Christ with God as to exclude the possibility of the conception of any analogous unity between the Christ and men? Can there be any doubt, either, that there is a direct connection between the unwarranted exaltation of the Christ in the Mass—by which is meant the imitation of the services of both the Jewish and pagan temples introduced into the wor-

ship at the altar—and the unwarranted degradation of manhood, as witnessed in the denial and suppression of social, educational, and civil, as well as religious, rights, which have characterized all countries in which the unreformed churches have had unopposed sway.\* Is it not significant that the recent changes in the directions of freedom and enlightenment in some of these latter countries have been accompanied by a distinct lessening of the influence of the Church?

But how is it, some one may ask, with those doctrines so clearly connected with that of the Trinity—with those that concern the immaculate conception and the incarnation?—are these, too, stated in the Bible only suggestively? Most certainly they are; and in a sense still more apparent than is true of the doctrines already considered. It is true that, in the Scriptures, the Christ is repeatedly termed the Son of God, and that his coming as such is represented as having been foretold, and as having been voluntary on his own part. But associated with these representations we have, in the first verse of the first chapter of Matthew, what is stated to be “the generation of Jesus Christ.” †

\* Contrast merely the percentages of illiteracy in certain countries of Europe, controlled respectively by the adherents of the reformed and of the unreformed churches. The figures are taken from Appleton's Universal Cyclopedia for 1906.

German Empire, 0.11	Netherlands, 5.40	Russia, 70.80
Sweden and Norway, 0.11	England, 5.80	Portugal, 79.
Denmark, 0.54	Italy, 38.90	Servia, 86.
Finland, 1.60	Greece, 45.	Rumania, 89.
Scotland, 3.57	Spain, 68.10	

† The ecclesiastical explanation of this is that it refers to legal parentage, not to paternity. Yet the reading of Matt. 1; 16, preferred by W. C. Allen in his

What is it? It is the genealogy of Joseph, and of him alone. The writer of this genealogy thought either that it was important for us to believe Jesus to have been the son of Mary alone, or he did not think so. If he had thought it important, he would not have given us the genealogy of Joseph alone, or at all. He gave us this. Therefore, we must conclude that he did not think the belief important. Now if, in the perplexity in which this first verse of the New Testament naturally plunges us, we recall one fact, we may have the perplexity somewhat lessened, at least. The Scriptures are constantly attributing to God things that are done by men, and rightly, too; for if there be a God, he must work through man as well as through material nature. If we bear this in mind, we shall perceive that it need make no practical difference in the effect upon our lives whether we consider Jesus to have been miraculously conceived, or merely at the time of his birth made what he was by the Spirit; or, in connection with one or both of these, or even with neither, taken possession of by the Spirit, or, as the theosophists say, a Spirit at one with God, at the time of his baptism and induction into the ministry, as indicated in Matt. 3; 16: "And Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him" (not necessarily unto everybody) "and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting

"Critical and Exegetical Commentary" on this Gospel, is that of the Sinaitic Syrian version, which is, "Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary, a virgin, begat Jesus, who is called Christ."

upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." All these theories involve the conception of a man inspired from the highest spiritual source; one of the three can be accepted by any one who believes in any form of inspiration, from that represented in immaculate conception to that reported in psychic research. It is not absolutely necessary, either, that one should have more than the last conception, in order to receive the full effects of the work of the Christ. If his words and works, as recorded and developed historically, appeal to a man as manifesting the highest qualities of spiritual life, this man will be forced—he can not avoid it—to recognize the Christ as the representative on earth of divine life. What more than this simple recognition is needed for the practical results and purposes of the Christian religion? To say that such recognition is sufficient need not prevent those whose minds require more from accepting the most extreme views and arguing others into accepting them. But it does tend to prevent the use of the machinery of the Church in order to force all men to accept these views. In preventing this, it tends to prevent also the harm which the Church may do through such a course. What is this harm? The causing of hundreds of thousands to reject Christianity entirely, because they have been taught to think that the whole system rests upon what they conceive to be a myth borrowed from heathendom—a myth because it is something which no one can

now prove; and borrowed, because a tale exactly like it is told of many of the founders of many other religions.\* The recognition of the sufficiency of the broader view would prevent, too, that lessening of the uniqueness of the work of the Christ which seems necessarily to accompany the ascribing of immaculateness not only to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but also, as among some, to Anne, the supposed mother of Mary.

Now let us pass on to consider what the Church represents as to the nature of the influence exerted by each member of the Trinity upon the salvation of man. God, the Father, we are told, created men, knowing from the beginning that many would be lost. But he elected some to salvation. That he might save these, yet satisfy his inherent sense of justice, it was arranged that the Christ should come to earth and, taking upon himself the punishment that men deserved, should suffer and die, tho not eternally. As a result, God was enabled to send his Spirit to dwell with those for whom the Christ died, and to sanctify and redeem them. Several of us probably have known personally some one who has declared his belief that no one can be saved

\* This is a statement which no student of history will deny. According to Greek or Roman mythology, Æthlius, Amphion, Apollo, Arcas, Aroclus, Æolus, Bacchus, Hercules, Mercury, Prometheus, and others were all sons of Jupiter by a mortal mother; and, at least, Perseus and Romulus, by a virgin-mother. A divine father and a virgin-mother were claimed also for the Indian Krishna and Buddha, the Siamese Codom, the Chinese Lao-tsze, the Egyptian Horus, the Persian Zoroaster, and others. The early Christian writer Justin Martyr, in his First Apology written about one hundred and twenty years after the time of the Christ, admits all this. In Chapter XXI he says, "You know how many sons your esteemed writers ascribe to Jupiter"; and in Chapter XXII, "If we even affirm that he was born of a virgin, we accept this in common with what you accept of Perseus," etc.



unless consciously, or, in some vague way, unconsciously, he has accepted the whole of this doctrine as thus exprest. The doctrine is undoubtedly suggested in the Bible. But—and this explains the use of the word *suggested* rather than *stated*—the opposite of the doctrine is just as clearly suggested. There is no hint of this doctrine in the parable of the prodigal son, or in such a passage as in Acts 10; 35, “In every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him”; and merely a hint in passages more to the point, like 1 Cor. 15; 22, “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” There seem to be only two conclusions which can be drawn from these discrepancies: first, that we should not be too certain that the view conforming to either side of the question is unqualifiedly correct, and so should not be too dogmatic; and, second, that both views probably represent some single spiritual principle which the limitations of human language have caused minds having a vague conception of this principle to represent in phrases or figures which, if interpreted too literally, are misleading.

The problem of salvation seems to involve this question—how can a man whose character is naturally formed and developed by the material be developed also by the spiritual, and ultimately changed into a spirit? That man is naturally developed by the material we all know. He is born with a material body. He learns by using eyes and ears upon material surroundings.

He thinks—clearly at least—because of material organs which can articulate words with which to formulate and separate his thoughts. He does his duty because he recognizes his relationships to material objects and being about him. When we consider how spiritual influence can be exerted upon him, it would seem that, according to this law of his nature, such influence, too, should be exerted in part through the material. If the object be to develop spiritual character, he should be able, if possible, to see this spiritual character embodied, and exerting influence, through a material body.

It is exactly such a requirement that appears to be fulfilled in the person of the Christ and of Christlike men. In the case of the Christ, however, it seemed necessary to show not only the presence of the spiritual in the material, but also the supremacy of the one over the other. How could this be done better than by a life in which all desires connected with the material, in so far as they interfered with the spiritual, were denied indulgence, and finally sacrificed, as in the death upon the cross. Nor does this conception of the influence of the Spirit as exerted externally through example, and therefore exerted, as it were, indirectly, interfere with a conception of its influence exerted internally and, as it were, directly. So far as we know, in this world, the two methods usually accompany each other. What is seen to be done by a hero upon a battle-field causes his followers to catch, as we say, his spirit.

What is known of the life and death of the Christ causes exactly the result indicated in such passages as in John 12; 32, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"; or in John 16; 7, "If I go not away the Comforter" (*i.e.*, the Holy Ghost, the Inspirer) "will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

It is apparently by carrying to what seem logical conclusions, not the spiritual significance, but the material figures representing some such primary principles as these that theology has built up its systems, going into details with reference to the functions of each person of the Trinity, the nature of divine sovereignty, foreknowledge, election, effectual calling, perseverance of the saints, and so on. A logical mind is made, of course, to be logical. It is merely exercising an inborn right when it is so; but has it a right to use other agencies than argument to cause other minds to accept its conclusions? Are not primary principles about all that one can expect the ordinary Christian to recognize? Are they not all that the great majority of the Christians about us actually do recognize? If so, to insist upon having all recognize what only a few are, even intellectually, prepared to accept, is practically needless. Besides this, it is harmful. Hundreds of thousands of sermons have been preached in many of our churches to show that people need not become fatalists, or doubt the love of God, or embrace any one of a dozen other conclusions detrimental to

Christian life, merely because certain doctrines of the Church seem to tend toward these conclusions. Why convey the impression then that it is essential to hold the doctrines from which such conclusions are derived? Of course, we must all have our own theories concerning religion; but it is better to keep opinion to ourselves than to be selfishly opinionated. We should all be logical; but we should also bear in mind that logic is merely a method, a method too that, if applied in certain cases, may, like light, bring others, if not ourselves, more of rottenness than of ripeness. We should all be alert to correct every deformity in the Christianity about us; but we should remember also that a prudent surgeon drops his scalpel when it seems to imperil life. Too much in the theory, the logic, and the activity of Christianity, as developed in our times, not only fails to influence for good many who think that they believe in it, but causes many, without good reason, to think that they do not believe in it.

Among this latter class may be included earnest seekers for truth not only in Christian, but in non-Christian countries. "In one part of the service in your temple," said the author once to an intelligent Buddhist priest of Japan, "gates were opened in front of a small shrine in which was an image of the Buddha. Were your people worshiping it"? "No," was answered; "the Buddha is known not to be present except in spirit." "But," said the questioner again,

“the words used called upon the Buddha to help them.” “Certainly,” came the reply; “the Buddha represents the highest attainment possible to the human intellect. Any one more intelligent than we are is naturally wiser. He can help us. Besides this, in a normal development, any one with the highest intelligence must have not only more knowledge, but more breadth of view, magnanimity, spirituality, as you Christians say. The Buddha helps us spiritually.” Again, a Moham-medan once, when trying to explain to the author the conception at the basis of his religious belief, used this illustration, “If I do what you want of me in my country, by and by I may go to your country. There I may need work, possibly food and clothing. Then I may find you, and, because of what I have done for you here, you may introduce me, say, to your father, and he will help me. Mohammed introduces us to God.” Possibly the adherent of some other religion might use somewhat similar illustrations to indicate his conception of the work done for him by its leader. What is important to notice is that, when we get down to the bases of these religions, there is not so much difference between them and Christianity as we sometimes suppose. Merely because human nature is everywhere the same, all men are apt to believe in some form of mediation that brings both intellectual and spiritual help. They may not call the agent of this “the Christ,” or “the Lord”; but we should not forget that it was the Christ himself who said (Matt.

7; 21), "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." If the thinkers of the world, either in Christian or in non-Christian communities, are ever to be brought into complete harmony with the Church, it will be because of its recognition of the full bearing of this principle upon doctrine and practise.

One word more now about that from which salvation through the Christ is supposed to save men. Some deem it to be from what is termed eternal punishment. But what does this mean? The Scriptures can not be said to do any more than *suggest* the answer. If the future state be one of progress, the man who has failed to avail himself of his advantages in this life will be eternally punished if eternally kept behind the degree of development attained by the man who has lived differently. But does the Greek term translated *eternal* indicate what we mean when we use the English term? Many scholars think not, and, even as applied to the English term, if by the "temporal" be meant the "material," why need the "eternal" mean any more than the "spiritual"? Even the mention, in Mark 9; 44, of the hell "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" is equivocal. The only place in which these conditions could be fulfilled literally would be in a material world like our own. But if it be a description of a material world, then future punishment means reincarnation. This would imply some



hope for those who experience it, as well as a larger hope for those who, having experienced here what it is for spirits to be in prison, wish to avoid any further experience of the same kind. Perhaps, on the whole, some such belief would be consoling. If we could think that, in our present life, we are being punished for sin in a former state, many of the mysteries of the world would be solved; and some of us would be much more grateful than we seem to be at present to recognize that we are not worse off than we are. But all these subjects are—why should they not remain?—subjects of speculation. No one view of them is necessary for the practical purposes of Christianity. In his saner moments, every man believes that all sin is, must be, punished by its influence upon his conscience or his surroundings, either in this world or in the next. Why should the Church not be satisfied with this general belief? Why should the harm be done which follows when many are led to think God unjust, while yet also a being to be worshiped and imitated; to say nothing about the harm done when the officials of a church attempt, for a compensation, to furnish a certificate to be accepted in the next world in place of character, as if, forsooth, it were not true that “the Lord knoweth them that are his”? (2 Tim. 2; 19).

The thought that is suggested to the author just here would, of itself, furnish no slight confirmation—if he still needed any—of the importance of the general subject treated in this book. The thought is this:

that very many of his readers will suppose that, by admitting the possibility of the truth of many of the theological tenets that have been mentioned, he is virtually arguing their probability, and even affirming their certainty. In reality, however, he is doing, and intending to do, nothing of the kind. But notice the proof that the existence of the supposition furnishes of the fact that, as a rule, men who discuss spiritual truth are expected to do this in the spirit of the propagandist, absolutely certain that one peculiar view is right, and that the world is doing wrong in not recognizing it to be such. Why is it that men appear so certain with reference to spiritual truth? The reason must be either in the nature of this truth or in themselves. It can not be in the nature of the truth, because, according to all serious thinkers, as well as writers of innumerable theological books, nothing is more difficult than it to understand or to apply. The reason for the apparent certainty must be, therefore, in the men themselves. What is it in men that causes them to claim to know with certainty that which, owing to its nature, can not be known with certainty? However we may reply to this; whether we ascribe the condition to individual self-esteem, pretense, or hypocrisy, or to the associative instincts of partizanship exerted in behalf of some defensive or aggressive church, the answer is not creditable to human nature. No man is dealing fairly with his fellows who is adding the weight of his own personality to the side of the

scale in which he is supposed to be putting only the truth. When will the millions of those who are continually doing this—some consciously and some unconsciously—recognize how immeasurably they might advance the spiritual enlightenment of those about them by acknowledging the exact facts with reference to the way in which they regard their creeds. How do they do this? How does faith regard any subjects which are at the basis of its own actions? As certain? No; if it did this it would be knowledge, not faith. It regards them as most highly and rationally probable, which is the same thing as to say that it accepts them as suggestively but not indisputably true. This being the case, how unfortunate it is that almost every new theological treatise, ritual or even hymnal, should seem to vie with the last in emphasizing that unfair trait in human nature which practically misrepresents the conditions which it professes to express!

This subject has some very practical bearings. The most important of these is this—that wherever an effort is made to advance any kind of truth through methods that involve untruth, as when, in a sermon or hymn, something is asserted to be certain which is felt to be merely probable—then, together with the influence of the truth, there is always conveyed some influence also of the untruth. Several years ago, the author was traveling on an ocean steamer. One Sunday evening the passengers were asked to assemble in the saloon for a service of praise. They were told that a fellow

passenger, a young Hebrew student of music, with an exceptionally fine voice, had promised to lead the singing. When they came together, they found that those in charge of the music had not selected hymns in which all could honestly join—hymns of general praise\*—but those giving dogmatic expression to the most distinctively orthodox Christian doctrines. Think of singing, in such a service, a hymn of adoration to “God in three persons, blessed Trinity,” or hymn 170 in the Presbyterian Hymnal, “God of God, Light of Light, lo, he abhors not the virgin’s womb, very God, Begotten not created, O come let us now adore him.” Yet probably these people, as lacking in Christian

\* Like those beginning with the lines, “My God, how endless is thy love”; “Sweet is the work, my God, my king”; “Lord of all being, throned afar”; “Nearer, my God, to thee”; “The spacious firmament on high”; “All people that on earth do dwell”; “O bless the Lord, my soul”; “O worship the Lord, all glorious above”; “Through all the changing scenes of life”; “O God, our help in ages past”; “Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme”; “When all thy mercies, O my God”; “Gracious Spirit, love divine”; “He that goeth forth with weeping”; “Teach me, my God, my king”; “Father, whate’er of earthly bliss”; “I love to steal away”; “Hail to the brightness of Zion’s glad morning”; “Come, ye disconsolate”; “To-morrow, Lord, is thine”; “Gently, Lord, O gently lead us”; “My soul, be on thy guard”; “The King of Love my shepherd is”; “God is my strong salvation”; “While thee I seek protecting power”; “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah”; “Lead, kindly light”; “In heavenly love abiding”; “Thy way, not mine, O Lord”; “He leadeth me, O blessed thought”; “God is the refuge of his saints”; “My God, my Father, while I stray”; “God moves in a mysterious way”; “The Lord my shepherd is”; “Your harps, ye trembling saints”; “My times are in thy hands”; “How gentle God’s commands”; “My God, the spring of all my joys”; “My God, is any hour so sweet?” “Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire”; “O thou that hearest prayer”; “As pants the heart for cooling streams”; “I do not ask, O Lord, that life may be”; “My God, permit me not to be”; “’Tis by the faith of joys to come”; “Beyond the smiling and the weeping”; “One sweetly solemn thought”; “O mother, dear Jerusalem”; “Forever with the Lord”; “O, where shall rest be found?” “Brief life is here our portion”; “Jerusalem, the golden”; “There is a land of pure delight”; “O God, beneath thy guiding hand”; “O Lord of hosts, almighty King”; “God bless our native land”; “My country, ’tis of thee”; “Day by day, the manna fell,” etc.

courtesy as in character, thought that they were doing a religious deed in making this young Hebrew, on account, too, of his own good nature, give a distinctly dishonest expression to his own sentiments. It is not often that persons of so widely divergent views attempt to worship together. It is not often, therefore, that a supposed religious service involves so much that is irreligious. But when we think of the necessary differences in the premises, reasonings, and conclusions of human minds, even if all be Christians, can we be certain that many of the services held exclusively for them are entirely free from a tendency to the same form of irreligion; or that the Church itself is wholly without blame for this? Can we be certain, either, that those who are striving for the unity of Christendom while, at the same time, advocating a more strict acceptance by all men of the rites and creeds of their own branch of the Church are aiming at any result that is desirable? What is desirable seems to be the conforming of all spiritual methods to the requirements of spiritual truth, the very nature of which, as has been shown, necessitates its being communicated not dogmatically, but suggestively. Only when these requirements have been fulfilled can we have any reasonable expectation that the Church will be able also to conform its methods to the demands of the mature and rational mind which it should seek to influence, or to what we have every reason to believe to have been its practise during its earliest and most efficient period.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS AFFECTED BY CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL TRUTH SUGGESTIVE

The Church Not an End but a Means—The Church Intended to Influence Opinion, Inclination, and Conduct—Opinion Most Influenced Not by Authority, but by Thought—Illustrations from History—Same Principle Applied to the Influence Exerted Upon Belief by the Numbers Attending Any One Church—Or Exerted Upon Expressions of Belief—External Unity of the Church May Be Detrimental to Influence of Thought as Thought—Influence of Thought as Thought, Aside from the Influence of Authority Upon Christian Opinion—And Upon Conduct—Reasons for This—The Conception of the Church Which Harmonizes with the Testimony Afforded by Historic Christianity—By the Primitive Church—Enforced Unity of the Church Is Not the Spiritual Unity of Christians—Nor Is It Made Prominent Where the Church is Growing—The Church as Influencing Inclinations Through Rites or Rituals—Worship Can Not Be Exprest Through Argumentative or Dogmatic Language—Neglect of This Principle in English Cathedrals—In Assemblies of Those of Divergent Views—Principle Applied to Hymns—To Prayers and Repetitions of Creeds—The Church in Influencing Conduct is Sometimes Dictatorial, Sometimes Prohibitive, but Usually Negative—The Christianity of the Christ is Positive—The Christian Must Do More Than Seek His Own Salvation—Development in the Church of the Feeling of Individual Responsibility—Further Developments to Be Expected in the Future—These Theories Not Due to Lack of Appreciation of the Work of the Church.

The trend of thought in the chapter just closed may incline some to infer that the author underestimates the importance and influence of the Christian Church. But need this inference follow? The answer will depend—will it not?—upon one's conception of the object of the Church. We can imagine certain very worthy



people greatly elated and singing almost endless doxologies in view of Church-unity brought about through the method which is discredited in the concluding paragraph of the preceding chapter. But we can also imagine others, equally religious and conscientious, who, the day after unity had been thus obtained, and because it had been thus obtained, would consider it their duty to start a new schism. No schism can be started except as it starts what is claimed to be a church. Apparently, therefore, they would believe in a church as fully as would those from whom they had separated. To a certain extent, too, both parties would agree in their conception of the character and function of the Church. Both, for example, would consider it an external organization; but the one would look upon this as an end, and the other as a means. Otherwise the one would not make so much of organic unity nor the other so little. Some think that when the Church organization is considered an end there is danger of its arousing sentiments analogous to those finding expression in class-feeling, partizanship, and patriotism, all of which have important uses in life, but, nevertheless, have more or less tendency toward that narrow and selfish view of the supreme importance of oneself and his environment which leads a man to plan, in everything that is done, first, for his own set, for his own party, or for his own country, right or wrong. On the contrary, when the Church organization is considered a means, this very fact seems to subordinate such

sentiments to the study of methods needed in order to elevate the condition of every man, even tho a stranger, opponent, or alien, simply because it is felt that, by the ties of a common humanity, this man is related to every other man, and so to oneself. Which conception of the Church has the warrant of the Scriptures? Would it not be as difficult to find a single passage in them unequivocally suggesting the former as it would be to find one not unequivocally suggesting the latter? For instance, take Heb. 10; 24, 25, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another." It is certainly not the organization as such, nor the officials of the organization, that are emphasized in this, any more than is the case in the passage in James 5; 16 and 17, "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another. . . . The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." We can scarcely imagine a modern priest of any high Church quoting to his congregation such passages as these without qualification and explanation. And if not, why not? Which is more likely to be wrong, the conception exprest in the Scriptures or in the utterance of the modern priest?

Whether considered as a means or an end, we shall find the Church designed to influence men in three directions—that of opinion, of inclination, and of conduct, each respectively having mainly to do with

thought, with feeling, and with will. Opinion, at least religious opinion, is mainly affected by the doctrines of the Church; inclination by its methods of worship, or its services, as they are termed; and conduct by its discipline. At the same time, no ecclesiastical agencies seem intended to influence the mind in any one of these directions alone. The sacraments, for instance, are supposed to have effects in the direction of both worship and discipline, tho, at present, it might be said that they are chiefly directed toward emphasizing doctrine. This is owing to a method sometimes termed "fencing the ordinances." To this phrase and the purpose represented by it there could, of course, be no objection in case nothing were attempted further than to prevent a misunderstanding of the meaning of the ordinances and to promote an intelligent use of them. But much more than this is attempted. In many churches, rites like those accompanying the Lord's Supper, baptism, confession, burial, and marriage are administered to or for those alone who have given assent to certain dogmas having to do with the organization's general theories, but not, except very remotely, with these rites themselves. Through means of them and the natural desire of the people to share in whatever benefits may be supposed to attend them, the Church endeavors to enforce upon its members its whole theological system. The same endeavor is made also, but less directly, through the teaching of its catechisms and the enjoining of the public repetition in

its assemblies of its creeds, hymns, and rituals. The general influence thus exerted we may term that of ecclesiastical authority.

Now let us ask what is the actual effect of the enforcement by the Church of such authority? Does it furnish the most successful way of influencing opinions? Of course, the majority of men think that it does. Otherwise, our leading churches would not almost universally employ it. But are the views of the majority correct? When authority sets out to influence opinion, exactly what are its effects? Undoubtedly, to emphasize that which it proclaims. Moreover, because this is emphasized, almost all children, many women, and some men may suppose that they accept it as their own opinion. But let us consider the subject a moment. Opinion is an inference derived from thought, and thought is that of which we become conscious through thinking. Authority may dictate to a mind that which is the opinion of others; but this opinion can not become the mind's own, unless this mind be furnished with facts and proofs which can cause it, as a result of its own thinking, to draw the inference which the opinion expresses. Otherwise, if mere authority be exercised, wholly aside from that which only can legitimately influence thinking, one of two things will happen: either the mind will disregard authority and think for itself, or else it will submit to authority and not think at all—at least, about the subject which authority has tried to make it accept. In neither case

has authority been successful in influencing opinions—in the former case, because it has awakened thoughts leading away from the opinions which it would enforce; in the latter case, because it has suppress thoughts, substituting for rational acknowledgment of facts or proofs mere prejudice, and introducing for the governing principle of mind bigotry, superstition, or fanaticism. Only in the degree in which authority exerts its influence as an agency subordinated to the purpose of making men think about that which is presented can their minds be permanently influenced by it.

We find these facts illustrated in the histories of the Church in all countries. In the Middle Ages—as is true in some communities to-day—the influence of religion upon prejudice was enormous, but its influence upon thought was barely perceptible. The people, when driven by their priests, could hardly be said to be actuated by thought any more than the beasts of burden when driven by the people. Yet who can deny that not to be actuated by thought is not to be actuated by mind which God has made supreme in man? It is no wonder that, in individual conduct and in general civilization, there should have been, in those times, and is in those communities now, very little, either in private, social, or civic life, of what Paul, in Gal. 5; 22, terms the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. On the other hand, in every age in which Christianity has made great advances, whether in

the first centuries of the Christian era, in the reformation of the sixteenth century, or in the missionary enterprise of the nineteenth, it has done so with scarcely any help at all from the exertion of authority—simply through presenting thought to the thinking mind.

But it may be asked whether the fact that certain phases of opinion are accepted by large numbers, many of whom are intelligent and influential, does not, of itself, affect the thoughts of those whom the Church seeks to influence? Most certainly it does. In such cases, the presumption always is that the phase of opinion which appeals to so many of this character can not but be important. Very well, then, it may be added, the condition indicated is exactly that of the Church. Why, therefore, should this not seek to reenforce its doctrines through the influence of the number and character of its members? Who has said here that it should not? But there are different ways in which this kind of influence may be exerted. These may be illustrated by recalling those which may be adopted by a political party. The party may organize, hold meetings, have processions, and call attention to its principles by conducting what is termed a campaign of education, through such methods making an appeal to thought, and seeking to lead the people, through an exercise of their own intelligence, to accept the truth of which they have been convinced; or, on the other hand, the party may make its appeal merely to the spirit of comradeship—to that which causes men to join with their



friends, and to go with the crowd. So far as the latter method and it alone is pursued, success results because of preventing the people from thinking about the real issues. But in case they need to think about these; in case they be called upon to vote on questions especially demanding an exercise of mind, is it not easy to perceive that any large success in the campaign, tho no dishonesty were practised in it, would be detrimental to the interests of the country? And if this sort of campaign can not be justified in politics, how can it, in the least degree, be justified in religion, the whole object of which is, or should be, to influence the thoughtful side of a man's nature? The influence of the Church is not legitimately employed except when emphasizing phases of opinion in such a way as to make a man exercise his own thought with reference to them. Any method of presenting them of such a kind as to suppress a man's reasoning faculties is not above the level of witchcraft, which, before psychic subjects had been studied scientifically, was considered and, sometimes, as judged from its effects, rightly considered essentially Satanic.

Almost equally injurious is an influence upon a man's thoughts so exerted as to prevent any expression of them. The world can not afford to lose—no institution has a right to deprive it of—such results of private intelligence as may add to the intelligence of the community. But, as we all know, this is the exact effect often produced by the undue exercise of authority on

the part of the Church, whether the result of this be an influence exerted directly or indirectly. The author once boarded at the same house with a naval attaché of the Spanish legation in London. This man was always arguing against the Catholic Church, insisting, for instance, that its rapid growth in the United States presaged the speedy overthrow of our free institutions. Nevertheless, he attended regularly the services of this Church in London, his exprest reason for doing so being that, if he did not, he should lose social standing among those of his own country with whom he was obliged to associate. Here was a very mild phase of indirect influence, but nevertheless exerted so as to prevent an exceptionally intelligent man from expressing in conduct the results of his own thinking—in other words, from exerting his own intelligence in such a way as to add to the intelligence of the community. It is exactly the kind of influence that has been produced in every age and country in which has been experienced that so-styled blessed consummation which some have in mind when they pray for the unity of Christendom.

Wherever there has been one church, there, on account of the intrinsic selfishness, narrowness, and tyranny of its masses, as well as of its rulers, there has been, on the part of many of its ablest men—those best able to use their own minds—a seething mass of self-seeking calculation, moral cowardice, chronic hypocrisy, and habitual falsehood, with all the lack of integrity and intrinsic morality in every direction which neces-

sarily finds expression in one who dare not obey his conscience, or be an enthusiastic devotee of the truth as he himself perceives it. On the contrary, in the degree in which the conception of one church as a single external body, with one set of dogmas and rulers having authority over opinion and conscience, has declined, in that degree has the effect upon religious life of such influences as are merely social, political, or partizan declined; in other words, in that degree has truth been left to appeal to men merely as truth, and thought merely as thought. No one can overestimate the practical benefit of this result. To it is due almost all the progress of the world in either education, sociology, or government since the sixteenth century. It is not denied by any historian that this progress was first developed in the countries of Northern Europe, and among those who emigrated from them to America. It was in these countries in which men's general conception of the Christian Church was no longer confounded with that of a single external organization that thought was first allowed to exert the legitimate influence of thought upon the mind of the individual.\*

Has the influence thus exerted been detrimental to the effect of Christianity upon opinion and conduct? Does not this to-day in these Protestant countries exert as much influence as it does in non-Protestant countries upon public legislation and private character?

\* See note on page 195.

Would not the statement that the Christian sentiment of a nation demanded a certain measure have more weight with more legislators in Great Britain or in the United States than it would in France or in Italy? Certainly, in the former countries, in which virtually all men, by the very force of circumstances, have been, as it were, compelled to acknowledge that many different external organizations may be legitimate developments of the Church of the Christ, no legislator would dream of opposing any measure, as is frequently done in other countries, merely because of its being advocated by Christians. "At the head of the Government of this country," said Father Eugene Hannan, of St. Martin's Catholic Church, Washington, D. C., as reported in *The Evening Star*, December 17, 1906, "are Christian gentlemen, but it is not so with the French republic. They are unchristian and atheistic and hate the name of God." "I am weighing my words," said Cardinal Gibbons, the head of the Catholic Church of the United States, in a statement prepared by him and published in most of the papers of America and Europe on December 14, 1906—"I am weighing my words, and say, with deliberate conviction, that the leaders of the present French Government are actuated by nothing less than hatred of religion. We have no spirits akin to these in this country. We have here much indifference to religion; but we have no body of men, no great party that makes it a chief aim to weaken the power of religion, and, if possible, utterly to destroy it out of

the land. But in France the Jacobin party is not dead. Their spirit is as living to-day as it was in the last decade of the eighteenth century. They hate God; they hate Christ; they hate his religion. And yet the utterances of such men are received as unsuspectingly by many Americans as would be a discourse by Mr. Cleveland, Mr. Roosevelt, or Mr. Taft—men who recognize the powerful influence religion has in promoting the welfare of society . . . It is easy to show that I am not misrepresenting. . . . Let me give you a few examples of the language of these men and you can judge if the American people have ever heard anything similar from their own leaders, or if any American statesmen would dare to utter such statements. What would we Americans say if a Cabinet officer were to propose this?" etc. Such, according to the testimony of the primate of the Catholic Church in America, is the condition in France three or four hundred years after the too nearly successful attempt to suppress religious non-conformity in that country through the killing or banishing, so far as possible, of all the Huguenots. The proportion, too, of the people of France who are willing to be led by the element which the cardinal deplotes is significant. According to telegraphic reports published in all our newspapers of February 20, 1907, two months after this cardinal and others had had ample opportunity to explain the animus of these irreligious leaders, one of their actions, subsequently denounced by the Vatican, was sustained by the representatives of the

people in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris by a vote of 389 to 88.

Now let us notice another noteworthy fact, so generally acknowledged as to need no confirmation. It is this—that no Englishman or American of wide experience would admit that the intellectual or moral character of Christian people, especially of the Christian clergy, ranks lower—he is usually ready to argue that it ranks higher—in his own country than in any country exclusively controlled or dominated by a single church. Probably no man in the United States, certainly none, so far as recorded, thought of challenging the following statement written to a Catholic, Mrs. Bellamy Storer, by President Roosevelt on May 18, 1900, and published in all the principal newspapers of the country on December 11, 1906: “I emphatically feel, as I have always told you, that the chance for bettering the Catholic inhabitants of the tropic islands lies by bringing them up to the highest standard of American Catholicism. The worst thing that could happen both for them and the Catholic Church would be for the Catholic Church to champion the iniquities that have undoubtedly been committed, not only by lay, but by clerical would-be leaders in the Philippines and elsewhere. One incident, which I actually can not put on paper, came to my personal knowledge in connection with a high Catholic ecclesiastic in Cuba, which was of a character so revolting and bestial that it made one feel that the whole hierarchy in the island



needed drastic renovation." Think how impossible it would be to make such an accusation against any official or officials of any church in the United States without an instant demand for proof and the ecclesiastical prosecution of the one accused!

For these conditions—for the respect paid to the opinions of Christians as Christians, and for the general belief in their intellectual and moral integrity—there are extremely good reasons; and they are all connected with the existence of what is termed schism. The first of these reasons is that, when every one is not only free in fact, but feels free, to express, in word and deed, his own inward religious convictions, the tendency to that trait, which probably the majority of men acknowledge to be at the basis of all that is most reprehensible in character—*i.e.*, untruthfulness—is lessened. The requirements of religion at least furnish no occasion for indulgence in it. The second reason is that, where there are many different branches of the Church representing many different views and methods, with some of which one can hardly fail to agree, the tendency to truthfulness is increased. The third reason is that this tendency is developed in such a way as not necessarily to unchurch a man. He can still remain theoretically a member of the Church universal, through joining one of the bodies recognized to be one of its legitimate branches. The fourth reason is the natural and inevitable competition between these branches. This need not be, and, in America, it is not, as a rule, at all hos-

tile; nevertheless it causes the members of each branch to be critical of those of other branches, and thus serves to keep all true to a high standard. Finally, a fifth reason is that this high standard is attained through the only condition of Church life which can actually make it and Christian life synonymous. Probably there are hundreds of thousands to-day in France and Italy who, while claiming to be friendly to the ideal embodied in the life of Jesus, acknowledge themselves to be enemies of the only organization which to them represents the Church. This statement could not be applied to the same extent in either Great Britain or the United States, simply because the conception that in these countries men have of the Church, as something not necessarily involving a single external organization, renders the condition indicated unnecessary, if not impossible.

Now can this conception, which seems to be so rational in itself and so beneficial in its results, be justified by the lessons derivable from what is termed historic Christianity;—in other words—to use the term in the sense in which those did who originated it—from the history of the development of the Church as an external organization? A negative answer is often given to this question; and such an answer is often supposed by high-churchmen to furnish an irrefutable argument against the view that has here been presented. But let us think a little. The only logical answer to our question must make it affirmative. Consider, for a

moment, the contents of ecclesiastical history. Of what do they mainly consist? Of what except records of methods through which individuals and communities have protested against assumptions of authority in matters of belief and practise on the part of councils and officials of the Church? Of what except the records of controversies, persecutions, and wars that have resulted on account of the persistence of these protesters? Of what except the records, one after another, of the triumphs, not invariable but frequent, of these protesters or of their successors? Merely a list of the names of the different Christian churches might furnish an indisputable proof that what some term the "divine influence" manifested in processes of development has not kept the Church an organic unity, but has brought into being many different organizations. These have originated, too, almost always because of fidelity to conviction and conscience on the part of those who, like the earliest followers of the great Master, were "put out" of some existing "synagogue" (John 9; 22, 12; 42, 16; 2). The Nestorian, Armenian, Coptic, Greek, Roman, Waldensian, English, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan churches are all distinct and different. Many of them are much more distinct and different than are the more recently organized Protestant sects at present existing in England and the United States; for these latter are accustomed, as most of the former are not, to exchange both members and pastors. In view especially of this latter fact, and of

the development of charity both of head and heart which it indicates, no extreme Protestant need fear to acknowledge all the force that there may be in the argument derived from the development of historic Christianity. But while accepting this argument, he has a right to insist that his opponents who start it shall agree not to stop it before it reaches its logical termination. What is this? The acknowledging of the legitimacy of the condition that the Church has attained in England and the United States. The majority of the people of these countries alone of all the world have carried into practise the only theory concerning the Church which can be rightly inferred from the ways in which the Providence of God, through the ages, has developed it. Its growth has been not that of a stream, always moving toward some single channel and never upward; but like that of a tree, always getting away from its one trunk and mounting higher, as well as revealing, in each successive season new branches which, to one who did not know that all were offshoots of a single stalk, would seem not only more numerous, but more divergent. So much for the argument from historic Christianity.

Now let us notice whether the same conception is justified by something else—*i.e.*, by the conditions existing in the primitive church, so far as these are revealed in the records of the Scriptures. There need be no uncertain answer to this question. Take such a passage as the one undoubtedly referring to the Church,

beginning, "There is one body and one Spirit" (Eph. 4; 4), or 1 Cor. 12; 13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"—do these passages refer to a spiritual body or to a material one?—and if to the latter, in what circumstances can one spirit be supposed to animate this material body or organization? Is it when the organization, as such, forces men to utter one set of opinions and to perform one set of rites, while, all the time, they may be thinking something different in their minds, and wishing to do it in their hearts? Yet this is exactly the condition where unity is enforced either by the action of officials, or by the popular sentiment in the organization occasioned by such action.

It certainly seems difficult to understand how unity that is thus enforced can ever be unity of the spirit. No two individuals can have unity of spirit except in the degree in which, in the presence of the other, each is free, and feels free, to say and to do what he chooses. Why should it not be the same in the case of two, or of any number of Christians? But if it be the same, then one might say with truth that there is often far more religious unity of spirit in one little New England village, tho divided into half a dozen sects all agreeing to disagree in some things, but uniting, as they usually do, in the practical work of charitable organizations and Men's or Women's Christian Associations, than would be possible in any single church in Christendom inspired by the merely partizan spirit that caused its members to speak of it as "the" church.



At this point the reader may begin to perceive the bearings of these conclusions upon the subject mooted at the opening of the present chapter. If men believe that any phase of opinion, whether religious or political, be essential to human welfare, or be merely very important, it is natural, and, sometimes, obligatory that they should unite with others of the same belief, and organize, in order to propagate this phase of opinion. Their organization, in proportion to its size and to the character of its members, may—as it must necessarily—draw attention to the phase of opinion for which it stands, but, for reasons already given, for it to exert even in this way any except a distinctly mental influence is not legitimate theoretically. Nor is it wise practically. Who can have failed to notice this latter fact? When a man is trying to control our thought, he is apt to succeed in exactly the degree in which he seems to be expressing his own personal convictions. The moment that we have reason to suppose him a special pleader for a certain cause or clientage of which he is the official spokesman, we keep our minds more or less closed even to those parts of his argument which we should otherwise accept. A preacher who is always backing his pleas with the authority of the Church may have great influence with those of his own communion, but he has little influence with others. This fact alone accounts for the rapid growth of Christianity in every age and country in which those who have pleaded for it have seemed to stand, as it were alone, and to work



for their own individual belief, rather than for that of an organization of which they were members. It was so in the early days of Christianity, of the Reformation, of the Wesleyan revival, and of the Salvation Army; and it characterizes the great missionary work at home and abroad that is carried on at present very largely by laymen of the various Christian associations.

So much with reference to the Church's influencing thought through enforcing belief in its doctrines. On page 212, the second object of the Church was said to be to influence inclinations or feeling. This is a far more important phase of its influence than is sometimes recognized. Many, especially in Protestant countries, suppose that the chief, if not the sole, object of attending a church service is to hear the sermon. But what will those who think this do in case the sermon contain for them nothing new in the way of thought, nor even—what is sometimes a substitute for thought—in the way of presentation? This can be said of many a sermon, and, by experienced readers or thinkers, of many that are quite instructive and inspiring to the young and inexperienced. What then? Shall those whom the sermon fails to interest cease to attend the services? Yes, if they be accustomed to follow only their own inclinations. But not by any means “yes,” if they be accustomed to regard the welfare of others. In the latter case, they are likely to recall that the young need to be instructed, the inexperienced to be guided, the despondent to be made hopeful, the selfish

to be made sympathetic, the sordid to be made aspiring, as well as a whole world of people almost submerged in a mean fight for material gains to be saved from it by the rest and meditation naturally accompanying a still Sabbath, and the uplift and outlook naturally suggested by a religious gathering. This is the reason why many a man who expects to get nothing for himself from the sermon never fails to be present where others can hear it. Nor can it be truly said even of him that he gets from the service nothing for himself. That which does not minister to the head may minister to the heart. For some, the mere assembling with others, though, as often in the meetings of the Society of Friends, no word be uttered, has, in itself, a humanizing, a sympathetic, and therefore a spiritual effect; and upon many more the ritual, but especially the music, exerts a similar effect. These facts are formally recognized in most churches by the use that is made of the sacramental rites, especially those connected with the "communion," or the "Lord's Supper," and of the hymns, chants, and prayers. Even the sacramental rites, however, so long as they may be supposed to influence in certain particular directions, do so chiefly on account of the expressions in the rituals that accompany them. For this reason, all that needs to be discust here may be included under what may be said of these latter. Let us ask, at once then, what is the legitimate influence of the Church's prayers and hymns? No one can deny that, to an extent, they may have

an educational and doctrinal effect. Therefore, it is merely natural that some should suppose it appropriate that they should often give an exact and even extreme expression to some peculiar dogma. Perhaps this form of expression may be justified so far as an influence is intended to be exerted upon children, for whose opinions their parents are as yet responsible, or upon grown people who have long been accustomed to receive certain dogmas as true. But in churches the doors of which are thrown open in the hope that all who enter may join in the services as well as listen to the sermons, may not the dogmatic, when introduced into the devotional parts of the exercises, effectually interfere with that for which these are intended?

We all know that emotional conditions of mind differ from those that are logical, and that, sometimes, the two are antagonistic. If a man be in an excited mood, either hilarious or grievous, his excitement is likely to disappear the moment he becomes thoroughly absorbed in the solution of a mathematical problem. So with a worshiper expected to join in a church service. Anything that appeals to his argumentative faculties, even if not opposed to his own traditional or speculative opinions, nevertheless supplants, to some extent, that which is essential to the spirit of worship. This fact has been practically, tho possibly unconsciously, recognized by the organizations of laymen which conduct the largely attended meetings for men held on Sundays in certain theaters of most of our American

cities. The non-dogmatic character of the hymns and prayers at these meetings is to be ascribed not only to the practical aim of avoiding offense, but to the philosophic aim of securing concurrence of emotion, and of affording a method of worship truly representative of the devotional attitude of all. The result is one more of many instances proving the truth of the statement of the Christ that the kingdom of God, because within, "cometh not by observation," or "through things to be observed" (Luke 17; 20). How few important changes in the methods of the Church have been started by others than laymen or subordinate clergymen! Apparently, the government of God in the Church differs in no respect from his government in the state, in which, as a rule, reforms come from those who are in humble rather than in high positions. As Paul says in 1 Cor. 1; 27, "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." As for this change in the removal of dogmatism from the prayers and hymns, is it not about time that the wisdom of doing it should be acknowledged by the Church as a church? Why should unity in devotion, or the possibility of devotion of any kind, be imperiled by the introduction of that which, as compared with it, is really non-essential? Why should not the service of petition and praise, so far as concerns this alone, be one in which all can truthfully join? In asking this question, the author would not like to have his readers imagine him so unacquainted with esthetic

effects as not to recognize that with many the harmony of a service, especially if it be wholly musical, exerts a far more potent influence than do the words used in it, frequently, indeed, causing the meanings of these to be wholly disregarded. We all know that college students of the most scrupulous morality join not only with great heartiness, but with great sympathetic benefit to themselves, in the singing of extremely bacchanalian songs; and do so without the least consciousness that the sentiments in these entirely misrepresent their own convictions and practises. The same principle applies to large numbers who derive a corresponding benefit by joining in the music, tho they can not join in the sentiment, of the services of the church. But the principle does not apply to all; and for their sakes, as well as because of the supreme importance of avoiding, in the worship of God at least, the slightest tendency to evil, the words presented for use should be confined, if possible, to such as all can use with absolute truthfulness.

It seems strange that the English Church has not considered this question as related, at least, to the mode of worship used in its cathedrals. At present the only difference between the service in these and in the smaller parish churches is that the former is a little more of a spectacle—therefore one might almost say a little less spiritual. But suppose a service of another kind were introduced into the cathedral—a service in which every religious man of the nation could join.

In this case, how much more than at present might the Church be able to do for the nation and for humanity! But no; "God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise" (1 Cor. 1; 27); and the spiritual work that might be done for the Christ by the learned "hierarchy enthroned" in a cathedral is left to be done mainly by unlettered laymen on the stage of a theater.

A more broadly phrased ritual and hymnal is needed however, not merely when an audience is expected to be large, but, still more, when on account of being large it is expected to be promiscuous—to be composed of those of many divergent views. This latter condition may exist often where the assembly is comparatively small, as on shipboard, or at an army-post. Frequently, in such places, men of different religious convictions would like to worship with their fellows; but some of them can not do so because of the supposition—to say nothing of the self-righteous and self-opinionated determination—on the part of others that devotion must be dogmatic. Who can deny that it would be expedient, as well as charitable, for the Christian Church to prepare and recommend rituals and hymns that could meet such conditions?

Were this work to be undertaken those engaged in it would be surprized to find, not how much, but how little—yet enough to justify their efforts—would need to be omitted or changed. To illustrate this in the case of hymns, any religious man can join in almost any



of these addressing either the Father or the Spirit, or dwelling upon the aspirations or the duties of the religious life. Even with reference to other hymns that seem less general in expression, it is simply a fact that, no matter what it may be written to express, the best hymn, or even prayer, like genuine poetry, or a sincere request, is seldom didactic. It gives utterance to that which is in the heart rather than in the head. When the heart speaks, the expression may be very vague, yet sufficiently suggestive to satisfy those whose conceptions are very definite. A hymn that, at one time, was invariably sung at every communion service in a certain well-known Presbyterian church was written to give vent to the feelings of a Unitarian; and it is not too much to say that many of the words inspired by the most intense consciousness of faith in the Christ and communion with him could be sung, because of their purely poetic quality, not only by Unitarians, but by Hebrews and Buddhists, especially if it were understood that, by common consent, the phraseology could be accepted in a suggestive and not a dogmatic sense. Of course, such religionists could not join in singing lines like those mentioned on page 208; but might it not be better for the spirit of devotion—to say no more—if believers, no matter how fervent, in the Trinity or the incarnation, could be induced to express their feelings in terms less mathematical and physical?

Now let us consider the prayers that make up so large a part of many of the rituals. We shall find that the

tendency to dogmatism by no means asserts itself in all of these. It would be difficult to find a religious man of any belief who could not join in "The Lord's Prayer," or even in petitions tendered "in the name of the Lord," in case it were understood that the worshipers' interpretations of this phrase could be allowed to differ. But why should they not be? To allow this would merely carry out the logical inference from the conception that spiritual truth should be considered suggestive rather than dogmatic. Moreover, it would merely be recognizing publicly a fact already recognized privately. The fact is this—that all the worshipers, even in the most orthodox churches, do not interpret the phrase in exactly the same way. Why should not the theory of the Church, in this regard, be made to conform with acknowledged practise? As for the repeating or singing together of what is termed "the creed"—even if as elementary as the Apostles'—may not this practise, except in meetings held exclusively for the expression of the religious convictions of particular organizations, be a little, to quote Shakespeare, "from the purpose" of the services into which it is introduced? In promiscuous audiences, may it not exalt dogmatism to the detriment of both devotion and truthfulness, and not infrequently to their exclusion?

The third object of the Church was said to be to influence will and conduct through discipline. The way in which a man supposes this object to be attainable will depend upon what has been already mentioned in

another connection, namely, upon the degree in which he conceives the Church to be an end or a means. By one who conceives it to be the former, discipline is often supposed to have accomplished its purpose when the members of a church have been brought into subjection to its officers, or have been made to fulfil its prescribed observances—as, for instance, by being present, once a week, in a building at a religious service where they can see others and let others see them; by paying regularly their pew-rent or other money due the church, and contributing their share to additional collections; or by not being absent too frequently from the confession or the communion. By those who conceive the Church to be a means rather than an end, the object of discipline is supposed to be attained in the degree in which its members are kept from pursuits or indulgences such as dancing, tippling, card-playing, or theater-going, which are considered to have an evil practical tendency, as well as from those which are more generally acknowledged by all to be wrong or vicious in themselves. The latter conception of the object of discipline is broader than the former, yet both are narrow—the former because it concerns itself merely with observances of the Church, and not with one's fulfilment of his duties toward his fellows; and the latter because it concerns itself merely with external conduct, and not with influences exerted over many inward motives which must be present before a man can be a Christian in the highest sense. This is the same

as to say that discipline exercised so as to secure merely such results as have been mentioned affects only a small part of that which constitutes character. Moreover, as a moment's thought will convince us, it affects only the meanest part of this, because it affects that part only which is actuated by a desire to secure one's own personal benefit, or, as this is termed in religion, one's own salvation. A man could possess all the traits which it would be possible for the kinds of discipline that have been mentioned to create or develop and yet do very little in the way of positively uplifting his fellows or manifesting such characteristics as were in the Christ.

Almost the last words of the great Master to his disciples on the eve of his Crucifixion, which he seems to have foreseen, were these (John 15; 11), "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." No man can have this joy in his soul who has not experienced within himself, in some degree, the love to which the Master refers in the verses preceding and following this; for instance, in verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love," and verses 12 and 13, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It was the self-renunciation exercised by the Christ, not in his own behalf but for the benefit of others, that caused the joy in which he wished that

others might share. That the same self-renunciation on their part might result in the same experience of joy is something of which all of us might become convinced, in a partial degree at least, from our own experience. Every man who has ever become wholly absorbed in a great undertaking, either in behalf of an individual, a society, or a state, knows something of the unconsciousness of weariness, danger, or pain accompanying the feeling of enthusiasm that carries one through his task. There is a joy of the conflict as great, at times, as that of any victory that can follow it. In the height of the battle the severest wounds are often unfelt. Experts in reading the human countenance declared in the sixteenth century, both in England and upon the Continent, that many martyrs burned at the stake had apparently experienced no physical suffering. Why should this not have been the case? If a man have no sense of pain when the conscious nature is benumbed as in ordinary hypnotism, why should not the same result follow the far more complete dominance of the subconscious when the spirit is supreme? Is it strange that the great Master should have wished something like the "joy" attendant upon this condition, as applied to the common disappointments and disasters of life, to be the perpetual experience of those whom he foresaw destined to constant conflict from which, in this world, there could be no release? The attitude of the Christian mind which, according to any profound or comprehensive view of the subject, the

discipline of the Church should be designed to develop—what can it be except such as is a natural expression of this “joy,” due to the pervading influence of the Spirit of the Master?

And how is it possible for one to possess this joy in anything like completeness who is merely seeking his own salvation? Every church in Christendom might be crowded with supplicants from morning to night, engaged, when not present in the church, in denying themselves every pleasure whatsoever, and even in starving and scourging themselves to the verge of death, and yet, among them all, there might not be one man really possessing the spirit or manifesting the conduct of a genuine follower of the Christ. The Christ did not aim for his own salvation. How can it be supposed that his followers should do this? A follower of the Savior should himself be a Savior. The delegating of all saving work to some official of a church, and the consequent lack of spiritual interest in life, because in it there seems nothing spiritual to do, is one of the saddest characteristics of the towns and villages of southern and eastern Europe. From them the scores of educational and benevolent secular and religious societies that give social and humanitarian employment to surplus aspiration in almost all similar localities in our own country seem to be entirely absent. No wonder that, where life is so tame, because, in the truest sense, so spiritless, many more than would otherwise be the case seek divertisement in tipping and



gambling and other pastimes that are frivolous if not vicious. About the only expression which is afforded in these communities for anything like that spiritual fellowship which is well-nigh essential for the full enjoyment of life is connected with ecclesiastical ceremonies. For providing these the Church should have full credit. They seem often like oases in a desert of disinterest. The ceremonies enable the people to sing and march together, all drest in their best and sometimes in fancy costumes; more than this, in such a condition to see others and—what is often more satisfactory—to be seen by them. Yet one can not avoid feeling that the consequent spiritual uplift is to that which might attend upon a broader conception of Christian life, just about what the assembling and blowing of the same people against the outside of a balloon in which they wished to rise might be to that which would follow the appropriate inflating of it. What the people most need is not a priest to marshal processions and emphasize his own leadership in these, but a presence of spiritual influence inspiring the conduct of ordinary life, and emphasizing the right and duty of every one to use his reason in methods of developing it. At what period in the Dark Ages did the officials of the Church discover that, in the degree in which this condition could be realized, that which would separate the people from the priest and elevate him would be decreased, whereas that which would join the priest to the people and elevate them would be increased!

It is interesting to trace the development of the conception of the privilege and responsibility of the individual Christian. The Wesleyans seem to have been the first, in our own country, to emphasize it strongly. But, in doing this, they have been surpassed recently by those enlisted in the Salvation Army. At first, in both bodies, the conception of Christian work was largely limited to that of exhorting. Many, however, can not exhort to edification. Owing to the discovery of this, perhaps, as much as to any other reason, there has been developed the theory embodied in the Young Men's and the Women's Christian Associations, as well as in other allied and similar societies, namely, that any method of increasing the comfort, the intelligence, and the spirituality of an individual or a community is directly Christian in effect. In fact, there has been developed the theory that, as the Church is a collection of the followers of the Christ, all services are appropriate for it which represent a ministering to humanity according to any of the methods of the Christ. He spent his time on earth not only in teaching, preaching, and praying, but (Acts 10; 38) in going "about and doing good," and in such ways that, after he had passed through a province, it might be said (Luke 7; 22) that "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear." All this kind of work was done, too, by one who, according to his own testimony (Luke 7; 34), came "eating and drinking," so that men said, "Behold a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of

publicans and sinners." It is the general principle underlying the methods of the Christ, as indicated in such passages, that has gradually led men to consider it a part of the work of the Church not only to establish hospitals for the sick and the unfortunate, and institutions for the education of the young, the blind, and the deaf, but, through all possible efforts in other directions also, to seek to diffuse knowledge which shall prevent and cure disease and suffering, and increase human comfort and welfare, whether manifested in spirit, mind, or body; and to do all these not in a super-spiritual, ultra-sanctified, unnatural way, causing men to rank the Christian with those who are not in real sympathy with the interests and pleasures of the world, but in a way following the example set by the Christ and fulfilling the conception expressed in his last prayer for his disciples (John 17; 15), "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." It is a development from considerations like these that has given rise, in late years, to what is termed the institutional church—a church containing many other rooms besides the main audience-hall, in which rooms, during almost every hour of every day of the week, individuals and classes can meet for instruction and entertainment, domestic, social, intellectual, and physical, as well as for what in the past has been termed religious. But, as yet, this conception of the institutional church is hardly out of its infancy. Men are supposed to be sufficiently loyal members of

such a church who merely support it with contributions of money. But there is a better way of doing this, and it must be found before the Christian can be brought fully into such sympathy with the work of the Christ as to possess that "joy" of which he spoke in the passage quoted a moment ago. This way will be found when each man has come to perceive it to be his privilege, as well as his duty, to spend a part—say a Sabbath part, a seventh—of his time and effort in the service of those from whom he can expect no return. This service may be rendered within or without a church-building, which, like the Church itself, is merely a means to an end; and it will usually be rendered most effectively in the direction in which the one who renders it is most of an expert. A teacher can instruct, a scientist can enlighten, an actor can represent, a singer can charm, a capitalist can subsidize, a banker can finance, a servant can attend, a clerk can assist. A housewife, a cook, a milliner—any one who wishes—can find something to do in adding to the information, the skill, the inspiration, the uplifting of the lives of those who, as related to that of which they themselves have made a specialty, may be supposed to be below their level.

And what about association, it may be asked, with the poor and the degraded?—where filth reeks and malignant germs are rampant? The cleanly and the cautious will have to guard against these, and run their risks, just as soldiers do on battle-fields. But let us hope that, before many years, the most illiterate and

lowly will attain such intelligence and thrift as to tolerate neither mire nor microbes, and even the capitalist, whom, by the way, we may always expect to have with us so long as human ability is able to triumph over lack of it, will not care to refuse to contribute toward fresh clothes for those who lack them, or toward a method of cleansing for those who have them. When that time comes, no one will any longer recognize the sarcasm in the Chinese story of the laboring man who, when a finely drest acquaintance had sought to snub him by not recognizing him on the street, prostrated himself, and rendered thanks to the man for having purchased and worn that elaborate and heavy suit of ivory that others might have a chance of gazing upon a spectacle of such unparalleled splendor; both rich and poor will learn, at last, that, at least, half the pleasure of life consists in having pleasurable surroundings; they will learn to give from what they themselves possess in order to increase the intelligence, the purity, the beauty, the elevation, the spirituality of their own environment. When this time comes, the Hebrew, the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, and all the others whom the Church is so anxious to convert to Christianity will scarcely need to be converted; they will be unable not to perceive, on every side of them, the proofs of the benefit which the world has received from it. These proofs will be afforded not because of any outside absolution or discipline traceable merely to a pope, a bishop, a priest, or a presbyter; but be-

cause of the example of private Christians who (1 Cor. 4; 2) "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness . . . but, by manifestation of the truth," commend themselves "to every man's conscience"; who have (Matt. 5; 16) "let their light so shine before men" that others, seeing their "good works," have been led "to glorify their father which is in heaven," and who, as confest followers of the Christ, have so manifested the character and aims of him whom they follow as to lead the world to recognize in him the ideal of all men, or, as declared in Hag. 2; 7, "the desire of all nations."

Sufficient has been said to indicate that the theories advanced in this book are not due to any lack of appreciation of the importance and influence of the Church. They are due to the fact that the author is unable to discover in what way many of the present methods of certain churches can have the effects upon opinion, worship, and conduct which not one, but every church should consider desirable. It seems to him, too, that these effects might all become possible were all the requirements for the member of the Church unmistakably related to a single and simple declaration of a purpose to heed the call of the Christ when he said "Follow me." No individualistic tendency of thought, feeling, or action could prevent any man from entering into the service of the Spirit for the good of humanity; and no one, once sincerely enlisted in such a service, could go far astray in any way.



## CHAPTER XI

### CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE AND CONDUCT AS AFFECTED BY CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL TRUTH SUGGESTIVE

Important to Consider the Church's Influence Upon the Individual—  
Supposed Origin of Subconscious Tendencies—The Important Mat-  
ter Is to Recognize That They Exist, and Are Often Antagonistic  
—The Antagonism Is Caused by a Consciousness, Which We Term  
Conscience, That One Tendency Has Superior Claims to Another—  
The Nature and Function of Conscience—Its Promptings from the  
Subconscious Different in Different Minds—Character of the In-  
fluence from the Subconscious to Some Extent Under One's Control  
—The Result of Environment and Habit—The Influence of Con-  
scious Repetition—The Influence of Rituals and Rites—Overbal-  
anced by the Influence of Example—Reasons for This—Futility of  
Confining Efforts for Reformation of Character to Effects Merely  
Addressing the Eye or Ear—Influence of Example Upon the Sub-  
conscious Mind.

If from the preceding discussion certain inferences may be drawn with reference to the methods best fitted to advance the purposes of the Church, still more important inferences may be drawn with reference to those best fitted to advance the interests of the individual. To these methods some references have necessarily been made when considering the work of the Church. But more remains to be said. According to the theory that has been presented, the Church is one, and only one, of many means of attaining the end for which it, together with other agencies, is designed. This end is the right development, and, so far as possible, the perfecting of the character of the individual.

In view of this object, a consideration of what this right development needs is as important in order to confirm what has been said hitherto as it is on its own account.

In order to ascertain, if possible, exactly what that is for which we are in search, let us recall the line of thought presented between pages 55 and 106 of this volume. Emphasis was there given to one fact which no one who has made a study of the human mind ever disputes. This is the fact that, aside from the processes of our minds of which we are aware, there are others, by which we are more or less influenced, of which we are not aware, except when, in fulfilment of certain mental laws, their results emerge into consciousness. The explanations of this fact differ. Some attribute the results to what has been stored in a man's memory during his present life; or, when thus stored, has been developed there through merely such methods as those of association, imagination, or logic. Some think that a certain reservoir, as it might be termed, of conceptions and tendencies is inseparable from the physical constitutions that we inherit from our ancestors. Some think that such conceptions and tendencies, tho purely mental in themselves, were developed in some physical relationship of the mind in a previous state, which mind, in its present state, is reincarnated; and, finally, some think that such experiences come from a mental or spiritual environment which enables the mere thinking of other intelligences to influence the mind almost

to the same degree in which through the senses it is influenced by persons or phenomena that can be seen or heard.

Possibly all these explanations may contain some truth. None of them can be proved to contain the whole truth. The explanations, however, need not concern us at present. No practical, not to say rational, man can expect to be influenced in a discussion like this by any except proved facts. From only such facts, therefore, will the conclusions that are to follow be derived. These facts may all be summarized in one, which is this—that whatever may be the source of sub-conscious processes of mind, every man is, more or less, influenced by them. Not merely a child, but every grown person, does many things for no more conscious reason than that he wants to do them. Some of these wants are connected with bodily appetite, as when one wishes to eat or to drink, and we may ascribe the effect to the craving of the physical nature. But other wants are, just as clearly, not connected with bodily appetite, as when a child seeks to satisfy his curiosity by obtaining knowledge, or his fancy by hearing a fairy tale. In the latter cases, we are obliged to attribute the result to a craving of his mental nature. If this were all that could be said, we might not be justified in inferring that there was any mental process preceding the craving. But let us consider the facts further. There are cases in which the physical craving and the mental, of both of which we are conscious, are clearly antago-

nistic. For instance, a child or a savage who discovers others eating, and snatches their food from them, especially if he injure or kill them in order to do this, is, according to almost all well-authenticated testimony, conscious of, at least, some slight feeling tending to deter him from his deed. The feeling might be supposed to be experienced merely because the physical were manifesting interference with the mental; because, to satisfy a desire for food, a man were disregarding his desire for fellowship, or, at least, for continued good fellowship, and were exciting enmity and danger to himself. Undoubtedly, all these have something to do with the feeling; and they indicate that there is a mental process in connection with it. But while one or the other of them may explain the particular situation indicated, they fail to bring clearly to the light the general principle underlying all possible situations.

This principle seems to be connected with the fact that the antagonistic impulse is felt whenever any appetite or desire whatever—whether of body or of mind, or whether by way of causing mere negative reluctance or positive fear—interferes with another desire which appears to have claims superior to its own. Exactly what the superior or higher desire is may not always be clearly distinguishable; but the general fact that it exists is distinguishable, and, in connection with the fact, the antagonism that is occasioned. It is to the consciousness of this antagonism that we ascribe what we term “conscience.” In itself con-

science seems to be a feeling existing anterior to any recognition, on our part, of any mental process preceding it. And yet a study of conscience finds it dictates so often rational that we seem obliged to associate them with the results of rational processes, though, usually, with processes that have taken place in our minds subconsciously in the sense that we ourselves were not conscious of them. We seem obliged to do this the more because, among the considerations contributing to the results, we can often detect conceptions known to have been stored in memory from experiences through which we ourselves have passed. Indeed, very few thinking men, no matter how unpremeditatedly and apparently instinctively conscience has impelled them to a certain course, will fail, when questioned, to give what they term their conscientious reasons for pursuing this course.

Conscience, therefore, seems to be a regulative faculty intended to control conscious mental action; but to be itself more or less subject to the control of subconscious mental action. So far as it is a regulative faculty, it apparently bears somewhat the same relation to proposed action as that which is borne by the instinct of self-preservation. When this latter instinct keeps a man from becoming intoxicated by liquor, or from jumping off a high precipice, the sensations that he feels are almost identical with those attributed to conscience in cases where this latter keeps him from stealing or from killing. Desires, lower or higher, seem to

be necessarily attendant upon lower or higher possibilities, and wherever both exist a regulative principle seems necessary in order to subject the former to the latter. When the desire for self-preservation keeps a man physically safe we attribute the result to his rationality. Can we attribute to the same the result when his conscience keeps him not only physically but, sometimes, mentally and spiritually safe? In other words, if one experience a similar sensation when rationality is trying to keep him from physical ruin, and also when conscience is trying to keep him from moral ruin, can we not conclude that, in some regards, the two are similar? Yet everybody knows that they are not similar in all regards. Few would say that, as ordinarily interpreted, rationality and conscientiousness are the same. In what regard then do they differ? The answer has already been suggested. The feeling experienced in conscience is connected with rationality only so far as it may be the result of subconscious processes of logic not manifesting themselves until the moment when they emerge into consciousness. The feeling experienced in rationality is the result of conscious processes of logic. A man can not be what we term conscientious without obeying his subconscious, which, as has been shown, is allied, at least, to his spiritual and moral nature. He may be rational, often so, as applied to certain questions, in the highest sense, without being influenced in the least from the subconscious, spiritual, or moral nature. At the same time, a



mind that is rational in the broadest meaning of that term—*i.e.*, accustomed to weigh candidly and justly all the reasons presented from every quarter—will not disregard the results of subconscious logic reported in conscience, any more than those of conscious logic recognized in the inferences of what is ordinarily termed reasoning. In all time, men seem to have accepted without questioning the impulses of conscience, as if intended, in some mysterious way, to register the opinion of the spiritual nature with reference to the spiritual quality of thought or action. What a confirmation of the truth of this conception is afforded by a clear recognition of the connection between the subconscious and the spiritual, as well as between what we term the promptings of conscience and the emergence into consciousness of the results of subconscious rational logic? Is there not the best of reasons why it should be admitted, as it usually is, that a man can not be religious without being conscientious? That he serves his conscience (2 Cor. 1; 12) furnishes the best possible proof that he walks according to his inward light (John 1; 9); that he is loyal to the kingdom of God as indicated by the laws that are written upon the heart (Heb. 8; 10).

But there is something else to be said in connection with conscience. As has been shown, it is always more or less subject to the control of subconscious mentality. This explains why the impulses of conscience, while inclining each to that which appears to him to be in

accordance with the highest desire, or to be, as we say, for the best, by no means incline each to think or to act in the same way. They may incline a savage to eat, a Moor to enslave, and an American to educate his captive. No more conscientious men have ever lived than some who appear to most of the enlightened people of our own time to have been mere superstitious bigots, malicious fanatics, or persecuting tyrants. These facts must be owing to different conditions in subconsciousness to which, or, at least, through which, the particular form of action to which conscience dictates is traceable. As intimated on page 248, it matters little practically what theory we adopt with reference to that which occasions these conditions, whether we derive them from heredity, from previous existence, or from spiritual or mental environment. We can not now change our ancestors or our past, nor be certain of the right way in which to avoid the possible influence of spirits whom we can not see or hear.

But according to any theory, there is, at least, one source of these conditions over which we can exercise control. This source is the present world in which we live. All the companionships, the customs, the opinions, the events with which our minds consciously come in contact, assist in forming within us such habits of thought, of feeling, of action; or, if not so, in filling our minds with such conceptions as, when recalled to memory, in accordance with the laws of association, shall determine the courses to which conscience impels

us. This latter, indeed, seems to be, in fact as well as in figure, an inward light enabling us to see the outlines of each present emergency merely or mainly as they appear against a background of our own past experience.

The fact, thus indicated, will be recognized to be of great importance. If every slightest record made on the mind through eye or ear remain there forever, as seems to be suggested by what was brought out on pages 57 to 63, how essential it is that, from the moment that a child begins to observe to the very end of his life, his mind should be kept from seeing or hearing that which, in any way, tends to lower his conceptions of such methods of thought or action as are worthy of himself or just toward his fellows! There are those who think it one of the objects of worldly existence to build up a spiritual environment, a heavenly mansion and estate, as it were, in which the soul shall dwell after passing out of this material existence. The truth of such a theory may not be possible to determine, but, by analogy, we can perceive that it is not contrary to reason. Even in present life men become that for which their previous experience has fitted them. Unless brought face to face with facts that evince the contrary, to those who have been thoughtful, all surroundings seem suggestive of thought; to those who have been cruel, all seem suggestive of cruelty; to those who have been pure, all seem suggestive of purity. If there be any existence after death, it must be mental

rather than material; and, so far as that which is material is left behind, whatever remains is that which during earthly experience has come, as we say, to occupy the mind. The inferences from these facts with reference to the importance of surrounding our children, as well as all the uninstructed and the unfortunate, with right influences, practical and theoretical, and of ourselves holding aloof from association with all that is evil, are obvious.\*

\*It has been ascertained that every influence with which we come in contact has a suggestive effect, which, without any effort or encouragement on the part of the subject of it, may develop in his mind very much as does a seed when it sends up from the ground a plant; moreover, that those promptings so necessary to moral character, which we attribute to instincts, ideals, or conscience, are all affected in strength and quality by the results in unconscious logic and imagination which are thus evolved. When, therefore, we are allowing the minds, especially of the young and susceptible, to be filled with interest in the methods of crime, and with descriptions or pictures of its accomplishment, we are necessarily imperiling that which lies at the basis of conduct, that which keeps ideals high and conscience firm; we are weighing down and handicapping the spirit itself in its efforts to get through life cleanly and honestly, and we are increasing very greatly its liability to fail in the struggle. At times, when people are shocked by what seems clearly indecent, they are ready to protest against the publication of certain proceedings in court or performances in theaters. But sensible people ought to think even when not shocked. Did they do so with reference to this subject, they would recognize that their protest is applicable to the publication of the portrayal of the details of any crime whatever—of swindling, blackmailing, burglary, arson, suicide, or murder, as well as of seduction or adultery. In our country, we believe in the freedom of the press; but, as rational creatures, only because of reasons—only as means to an end; only to preserve our civil, social, or religious rights; to keep our people from being despoiled of money, comfort, liberty, or other possessions or prerogatives of manhood. But whenever the freedom of the press, so beneficial in some regards, tends to destroy the people's rights, especially the rights of the young to be permitted to preserve unimpaired their standards of ideality and conscience, and the possession of all that strengthens one for the possibilities and triumphs of upright conduct, not to say of spiritual life, then the freedom of the press should be restricted. No details of crime of any kind should be allowed to be published as a part of the mere entertainment furnished by an ordinary newspaper. If the printing of them be necessary in order to secure the ends of justice, they should be confined, at least, to official court journals. . . . Publishers whose greed is so ravenous that it is allowed to outweigh care for the welfare of their own children can never be expected to be influenced by such a

No one can fail to recognize, however, that upon vast numbers no amount of care with reference to these matters can have much practical effect. Thousands of children are born into families, thousands of men are forced into occupations, where all environments are almost wholly vicious. What then? Is their condition hopeless? Presumably not. Probably no spirit's condition is hopeless except as a result of a conscious cultivation of that which is known to be wrong. That this is so seems to be a logical inference from another fact not yet indicated. The fact is this—that, altho the mind may keep stored in its subconscious region everything with which it has come in contact (page 58), it chiefly uses for immediate practical guidance such thoughts or experiences only as by repetition it has accustomed itself to use. A man who has merely read once a treatise on chemistry will seldom recall its teachings. But if he have studied the treatise often, and confirmed its deductions by experiments in the laboratory, he may make its principles and expositions regulative of almost every thought and feeling of his life. A man who has merely been told of the methods of representing notes in printed music, and on the keys of a piano, will seldom recall what he has heard, but if he have practised on a piano for four or five hours a day for years, he will have acquired, as a lifelong

minor consideration as the welfare of the community at large. The community must compel them to recognize its claims through legal enactments.—*Extract from an article by the author on "The Need of Legislation to Prevent the Portrayal of the Details of Crime."*

possession, certain characteristics of thought and action which pertain to only a musician. It is not merely the fact, therefore, of having an evil environment, and, for that matter, an evil psychical or physical inheritance, that determines for evil one's material or spiritual future. This is determined also by the fact of having yielded to the influence of the environment, of having repeated in thought and practised in deed the evil that was in the environment. Many a person, amid the worst surroundings, has not done this. These have seemed to arouse in him merely a repugnance against the evil. He has followed his conscience, at first, perhaps, only blindly, but, nevertheless, gradually, toward a place of comparative elevation and enlightenment. It is the duty of home, society, and church to recognize these facts, and to aim their efforts in such ways as to incite men to the repetition of that which shall cultivate habits of the highest quality.

Now how shall the cultivation of these, so far as they are religious, be brought about? It is natural for some to suppose and argue that this can be best done through a repetition of the doctrines and practises of the Church as exprest in its various rituals and ordinances. That these have some influence in the desired direction is undeniable; but it would be easy to show that this influence does not always follow from them necessarily, as well as to show that, when it does follow, it is owing to something else than themselves. Many a man who hears the dogmas of the Church repeated every Sunday



fails entirely to accept them in any such way as to cause them to become regulative principles of his thoughts; and many a devotee who joins, every time that he has an opportunity, in certain formal ceremonies of his church does not give the slightest evidence of being controlled in the bargainings of business life by the Spirit that was in the Christ.

Nevertheless, in some cases, all must acknowledge that these methods of the churches do appear effective. An apparent cause, however, is not necessarily an actual cause. Very much of the upright life which, in enlightened countries, the Church attributes to nothing aside from its own methods, may be found manifesting itself, in an equally efficient manner, in a country with a church pursuing entirely different methods. There is as much upright life in Norway or Scotland as in Greece or Spain. This would not be the case, if uprightness depended upon the methods of any particular church. If not upon the methods, then the result, wherever it exists, must depend upon something that can accompany different methods. What is this? What is invariably present wherever any methods of the Church tend to produce uprightness of character? There is but one answer, and everybody whose mind is unbiassed will admit it. That which invariably tends to produce uprightness of character among people in general is uprightness of character manifested by those who influence them. The methods of any church elevate the masses in the degree in which the teachers,

preachers, and members of that church are persons of exceptionally elevated character. If not; if, for instance, the words of an official of a church profess regard and consideration for his fellows, and, at the same time, his actions show disregard and lack of consideration, the people to whom he ministers are far more apt to accept the lesson taught by his secular example than by his ecclesiastical professions. Often, in such a case, the only thing on their part that can save their minds from an entirely erroneous, and, if the subject presented concern religion, an irreligious, inference is an exercise of rationality sufficient to perceive the logical incongruity between words and deeds; and to ascribe the wrong practise not to a wrong theory, but to a failure to join theory and practise together—a fact which furnishes one more proof of the importance, when considering the interests of even a very ritualistic church, of having the mind trained to act rationally. Here, as in other conditions already indicated, it is essential to recognize that rational action is to the spirit what self-defense is to the body.

The overbalancing effect of example as contrasted with profession is popularly recognized in the maxim that “actions speak louder than words.” Every maxim of this kind has usually underlying it the results not only of practical experience, but of philosophic reasoning. The latter in this case clearly connects what has just been said with the general conception of spiritual influence already so many times presented. We have

found, as a result of noticing the condition of a patient in a case of hypnotism, trance, or fever, that the mind subconsciously receives impressions in ways that accord with such methods as are attributable to mind-reading, whereas consciousness receives them through the eye or ear. It follows, therefore, that, if a man think or feel one thing and say another, his thoughts or feelings may influence his audience through sub-consciousness in one direction, while, at the same time, his words may influence them through consciousness in another direction. It has been shown, too, in this chapter that the influence through sub-consciousness is that of the two which has the more determining effect upon conscience and presumably by consequence upon character. The conclusion is inevitable, therefore, that, if a man while preaching love think hate—*i.e.*, if he be malicious or self-seeking in his methods of dealing with his fellows, then it is these tendencies which chiefly influence those who hear him, tho, at the same time, they apparently accept his words as true. There have been few times and places in Europe, during almost twenty centuries, in which preachers have not proclaimed the love of the Christ and the importance of regulating life according to the principles of the golden rule. Yet, during the majority of these centuries, those to whom their preaching was addrest have never dreamed of attempting to apply what has been heard by the ear to existing conditions as manifested in tyranny and cruelty. Even amid the boasted enlighten-

ment of our own day, how few are the minds in which the precepts of the Gospel have taken such deep subconscious lodgment that they really exert a controlling influence upon the dictates of conscience! All these conditions become intelligible the moment that we apprehend that it is the inner thoughts and feelings, often the unconscious motives of a man, rather than his profest opinions, that he is the more likely to communicate to those about him.

This being so, how futile to accomplish any effective reformation or elevation of character are any kinds or methods of rituals or rites designed to address the mind through only the ear or eye! Their partial influence no one can deny; but to suppose that they can be effective irrespective of the character of him who administers or of those who administer them—which accords with one of the doctrines of the unreformed churches—or that by whomever administered they are essential, is to manifest ignorance and disregard not only of the character, but of the existence of the subconscious spiritual nature. No wonder that the prophets even of Israel should have declared concerning such a conception: (1 Sam. 15; 22), "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice"; (Ps. 4; 5), "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness;" and (Prov. 21; 3), "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." In the New Testament, too, we read (Heb. 10; 11), "And every

priest standeth daily ministering and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin"; (Heb. 13; 16), "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"; (1 Cor. 1; 14), "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius." (V. 17), "For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel; not with the wisdom of words"; (2; 7), "but we speak the wisdom of God"; (2; 16), "We have the mind of Christ," and (11; 1), "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

For the conception of Christian influence exprest in this last quotation, the whole trend of thought in the present chapter has been preparing us. The call most frequently upon the lips of the Christ was "Follow me." A profound knowledge of human nature and of its needs underlay it. All his most efficient disciples, ever since, have repeated it, either explicitly or implicitly. So far as they have influenced the world for good, they have never done this merely or mainly by causing men to accept certain dogmas or rites. To accept or practise these, and to form habits of doing so, may aid in the culture of conduct, but infinitely less than does that which every church, at times, supplies, namely, association with those of pure and elevated personal character. These, like the great Master whom they follow, draw men into kindred discipleship, because, in the depths of the subconscious nature, they subtly incline to the constant practise of righteousness that

most powerful of all human reformatory agencies—the spirit of imitation. All the reasons, however, why this is so can not be presented except in connection with what is to be discust in the chapter following.



## CHAPTER XII

### CHRISTIAN FAITH AS AFFECTED BY CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL TRUTH SUGGESTIVE

Suggestion Influences One Differently When in a Conscious and in a Subconscious State—In Either State, He Surrenders Control of His Subconscious Mentality to One Alone in Whom He Has Confidence—Importance of Noticing This Influence of Personality—Its Relation to Christian Faith and Conversion—To Preaching and Revivals—Faith Not Peculiar to Christianity—Nature of Christian Faith—Faithfulness and Fidelity Essential to It—But Not Perfection of Character—Faith as Influenced by the Agencies Employed by the Church, as in Formulation—Error Necessarily Introduced Into This—Two Illustrations—Influence of Church Authority—Influence Upon Faith of the Historic Christ—How Faith Necessitates Freedom of Mental Action—Scriptural Warrant for This.

Christians, as a rule, while admitting that Christianity should influence conscience and conduct, claim that it should be expected to do this only indirectly, through first influencing faith. They quote the passage from Hab. 2; 4, so often repeated in the New Testament, "The just shall live by faith," and ask how can one live, or be saved by this, unless the reasons for having it have been made known to him? And what are such influences as are exerted by the dogmas and other agencies of the Church, except methods causing these reasons to be known? In answer, it must be admitted that faith—rational faith which only becomes a rational man—can not be awakened without reasons; but it need not be admitted that the most effective

reasons for having faith can be afforded by such methods as those indicated. Let us notice in this chapter why, in accordance with the conceptions already presented, this need not be admitted.

According to these conceptions, there are, in certain cases, tendencies of the mind coming from its inner region of subconsciousness which dominate its conscious thought and action. These tendencies, so far as they may be due to the agency of other minds, seem to result from suggestions which may be given by either very explicit and emphatic statements and examples, or by the contrary. The suggestions, after being received by the mind, are developed in it by subconscious processes until in some men they become so powerful as to influence all habitual opinions and practises. The development may take place while consciousness is inactive, as, occasionally, in fever, hypnotism, and trance, or while it is active. If inactive, it may exert no perceptible influence over the suggestion. If active, the exercise of conscious discrimination, as indicated on page 152, may assist both in determining the form of the suggestion when received and in developing it. In both cases, however, so far as can be ascertained, subconscious intellection manifests the same method. It accepts the suggestion, and develops it, according to laws determining its own inward processes. The acceptance of the suggestion, in the case of fever, hypnotism, or trance, is due to a surrender or waiving of influence on the part of the conscious mind—in fever,

because there is too much weakness to resist and not surrender; and in hypnotism and trance, because there is no strong wish to do otherwise. This is proved by the fact that some men can not be hypnotized, and comparatively few can go into a trance. By many, therefore, the methods used in order to make one lose his consciousness can be successfully resisted. But even where there is no loss of consciousness, where the mind apparently remains in a normal state, the suggestion that controls the subconscious processes may be due to a surrender analogous in kind tho much less complete in degree. Instances of this form of surrender many of us can recall from our own experience. We have said things and done things different from what not only our conscious reason and judgment, but our better inclination would approve; and all this apparently because some one, in some mysterious and occult way, has influenced us through suggestions given to our subconscious nature.

Now in what circumstances do our minds make either a complete or a partial surrender of conscious self-control? Almost invariably, so far as can be ascertained, it is when another person so affects us that we are willing to be controlled by his suggestion; in other words, when we have sufficient confidence, or, as used in a broad sense, *faith* in him for the kind of control that in the circumstances his suggestion needs to exercise. This can be affirmed even of cases in which a man—as, for instance, one who goes into a professional

trance—may be supposed to hypnotize himself. His own personal will then causes him to surrender his own conscious to his own subconscious nature. Usually, however, he surrenders to some one else—a spiritist medium to the person who comes to consult him, a hypnotic patient to a hypnotizer; and when the influence is exerted in connection with continued consciousness, as in the sphere of society, politics, or religion—when the surrender is made to some lover, pleader, or exhorter—it stands to reason, in all such cases, that a man surrenders to some one in whom, for some cause, he has confidence. In a case of hypnotism the result is expected to be merely temporary and comparatively unimportant. Therefore the mind influenced need have confidence in merely the skill and professional honesty of the operator. In other cases, as in that of religion, the result is represented, and often expected, to be of permanent and profound importance. Therefore the mind, before it can yield to the influence, needs to have the greatest possible confidence in the one to whom the surrender is expected to be made. This fact becomes more apparent in view of that which has already been pointed out as the most noteworthy difference between the conditions in the methods allied to hypnotism and those allied to religion, namely, the fact that, in the former, the conscious mind allows itself to do nothing, sometimes not enough to remain aware of its own identity; whereas, in the other state, the mind remains in the highest degree alert, the same

principle applying here as in inspiration, as explained on pages 92 to 96. Even in that ecstatic condition in which, as in the frenzy of fanaticism, the conscious reason seems to be paralyzed, it is, nevertheless, very wide-awake, as compared with the slumber which characterizes—sometimes, but not always—the subject of hypnotism.

Extremely important for us to notice here is the connection between the action of the mind, when subconsciously receiving or developing suggestions, and the influence upon this mind of personality. As has been said, this personality may be one's own. A man may hypnotize himself; or, without doing this consciously, he may do it in effect by surrendering the whole drift of his thought to his own inner instincts and impulses. Thus Milton, Wordsworth, and Napoleon, at a time when no outside person recognized that for which they were fitted, are said to have had faith in themselves. Usually, however, that which awakens faith is some other one's personality. Occasionally, this statement may seem disputable. But even then, as when one's faith is awakened by a book, it is a question whether he is not influenced really by the personality behind the book. As for effects produced by the dogmas and ordinances of the Church, it might be argued that it is less these than the personality of parents who accept them that influences the faith of children, as well as that it is the individual or collective personality of those who administer or attend the

services that influences the faith of others. At any rate, no one can deny that such is mainly the case. There may be differences, too, in the quality and quantity of the suggestions that prove influential. Mere words may have a certain effect. A man may hypnotize himself, as it were, by repeating a prayer, as in incantation. A priest may hypnotize him by waving in front of his eyes a crucifix or the eucharist; but, even in the latter case, the influence of the personal character of the priest, as shown in the preceding chapter, may be very much greater than that of the mere material symbol which is used.

For these reasons, when we are searching for that which is best fitted to influence religious faith, we should not be satisfied with anything that fails to present the most exalted conception of religious personality. It is only in the degree in which the suggestion of this is wholly what it should be that the faith which is awakened can exert a wholly regenerating influence. Why this is so is easy to explain. When men have sufficient confidence in another to surrender their subconscious mentality to his suggestions, they can not do otherwise than begin to imitate his modes of thinking, feeling, and acting. In other words, they can not do otherwise than begin to develop logically the suggestions which they have received from this person with reference to either theory or conduct, their minds, in these regards, acting in exact analogy to the way in which a hypnotized man accepts and fulfills the sug-



gestions of the hypnotizer (see page 116). As indicated already on page 120, the story of the conversion of the thief upon the cross beside that of Jesus (Luke 23; 40-43) corresponds entirely to what might be inferred from a knowledge of the methods through which the human mind must be influenced—in case there be any such thing as a subconscious spiritual nature, or a religious effect produced upon it. The thief might have professed to believe in the Christ, and not done so. But, in case that which he had seen and heard had really convinced him of the supreme, and, for this reason, divine quality of the Spirit that was in the Christ, from that moment the acceptance of this fact with the new premise from which all his mental subconscious processes were to be developed, would have been enough to change his entire conceptions of life and of its obligations. If from that time forward he had really believed the love manifested by the Christ to be the sovereign principle ruling in heaven, and himself to have been called to be a citizen of that heaven, there is no psychological reason why this premise and the endeavor in his own experience to carry it out logically should not have made him in spirit and, so far as possible with his physical frailties, in earthly relations also, a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.

There may be sound philosophy, therefore, in the theory that true religious life may be traceable to faith awakened by preaching, or by other agencies used in

the Church. But we must not forget the overbalancing influence also of the preacher, or officiator. As for the preaching, it seems to be in accordance with one of the most indisputable of nature's laws, that a man, through the workings of subconscious mental or spiritual processes, should become that which he is told that he may become. There may be much truth, too, in the theory that religious life may result from a very sudden conversion. It may be true besides this, inasmuch as the subconscious nature is influenced by suggestion imparted in connection with examples unconsciously set by individuals still more than by their conscious words and deeds (see page 261), that this sudden conversion may often take place in connection with a general movement such as is termed a revival, in which vast multitudes are simultaneously prompted to recognize their religious obligations. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that revivals are peculiar to a few favored sects of Christians, or even to Christianity. All human communities accepting any possible form of religion—from North American Indians to Arabian Mohammedans—have, at different times, become subject to these phenomena. Wherever the revivals have occurred, too, the overflow in the mind of influence from the subconscious and the consequent whelming, to some extent, of the conscious, with its necessarily rational control, has resulted in a certain amount of irrational, and therefore deleterious, action. Even in the day of Pentecost, Peter found it necessary to say (Acts 2; 15),

“These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” Both the generally beneficial effect of these revivals, issuing in many a sudden conversion, and their occasional excesses and injurious effects are explicable according to the theories connecting the subconscious and the religious as advanced in this book.

The same theories enable us to recognize that faith, too, is not peculiar, as is sometimes supposed, to Christianity. Only the declaring of faith to be the guiding religious principle is peculiar. As such, it is related to the revelation of the Christ in much the same way as induction as a philosophic principle is related to the writings of Bacon. Induction had been practised for centuries before the time of Bacon. What he did was to recognize the fact, and emphasize the importance of it. In a similar way, the Christ recognized and emphasized the importance of faith.

Now, having noticed what is the source of faith, let us consider, for a little, its nature. The Scriptures tell us in Heb. 11; 1, that faith is “the evidence of things not seen”—*i.e.*, the evidence in consciousness, augmented by all the comprehension of which the conscious mind is capable, of an influence beyond or below the reach of consciousness; of an influence which, tho manifested in its results, is not in itself perceptible. At first thought, the reader may be inclined to think that, while there may be in faith evidences of impulses, whims, ideals, hopes, that actuate some people, there

is no evidence, as is now to be maintained, of what may be termed the dominance of subconscious intellection as the latter is described in Chapters III and IV. But let him reflect a little. The Christ, in speaking in Luke 15; 17, of the turning-point in the life of the prodigal son, says that "he came to himself." This is the exact language in which almost every one describes the way in which a man who has been insane, intoxicated, or asleep gets out of this state into one that is normal and rational. What the Christ evidently meant was that at this time the prodigal came to a consciousness of his own mind and life, especially in their higher spiritual relations—to a consciousness, therefore, of those promptings of the better subconscious or spiritual self which ought to be supreme in every rational being. It is because of bringing one to a consciousness of these that conscience imparts a feeling of obligation.

The fact alone of coming to consciousness in the sense just indicated might not make a man of faith, much less a man of Christian faith. Faith is determined not by the mere recognition, but by the enthronement of these inward promptings; and Christian faith by the enthronement of the particular promptings to which the Christ directed attention. At the same time, a recognition of these promptings in any form must tend to make one correct his conscious by his subconscious intellection, and thus tend in the direction of faith.

Notice too that, as thus interpreted, faith is the evidence of obedience to a controlling tendency directing not merely toward opinion, but, as has already been shown in other connections, toward practise; for faith impels toward every direction in which a man can exercise conscious intelligence. "Shew me thy faith without thy works," says the Apostle, in James 2; 18, "and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Accordingly, we may say that in connection with any exercise of feeling, thought, or will faith involves a condition of conscious dependence upon a subconscious source of spiritual intelligence and guidance. Faith includes in its range, therefore, not only mental assent and belief, but also emotional and volitional acquiescence and loyalty; in fact, all that is indicated by the terms faithfulness and fidelity.

Once more, it needs to be noticed that, even with faithfulness and fidelity characterizing a man's faith, these do not necessarily insure perfection of character. A fanatic may have these, and be very far from being perfect. This is so, in the first place, because of the dependence of faith upon what one has already, through experience and habit, stored in subconsciousness. The faith itself may be genuine, and yet, working, as it often does, on very imperfect material—the memories and associations of some low form of life—its results may be very imperfect. In the second place, the same may be true because of the dependence of faith upon the degree and kind of conscious intelligence through

which the promptings from the subconscious must be outwardly exprest. It is impossible to suppose that any of these when modified at all—and they are always modified to some extent—can assume exactly the same phase when passing through the conscious mind of the educated and of the uneducated—that they will occasion in both exactly the same thoughts or deeds. Here again we may notice the analogy between the results of faith and of what we term conscience. Conscience impels a man toward that which he thinks ought to be done; but, as pointed out in Chapter XI, exactly what it is that ought to be done is, in each case, apparently left to be decided by his own intelligence. A cannibal may suppose that he ought to eat his enemies, but an enlightened man that he ought to feed them. Now why should not an analogous principle be fulfilled in connection with all tendencies started in the subconscious mind? And if so, what are we to conclude? That they do not tend toward the right? Not at all—only that, while they tend toward this, they do not immediately attain it. Once more, genuine faith may produce imperfect results, in the third place, because of its dependence upon a man's ability, even when he knows what should be done, to perform it. Faith, however strong and earnest, can not make a man cease to express his thoughts and feelings through his conscious mind and body, both comparatively weak, if not wicked. But faith can turn his energies in the right direction, and he can begin to walk by it, even tho



he may not, for many a long day, walk very fast or far, or without much stumbling.

What has been said of the source and nature of faith will enable us to discuss intelligently that which was mentioned in the opening paragraph of this chapter, namely, the tracing of faith to the agencies employed by the Church. For our present purpose, all these agencies may be classed under two heads: first, those connected with what may be termed the authoritative formulation of opinions as exprest in dogmatic creeds or rituals, the influence of which may be dissociated from that of personality; and, second, those connected with authoritative personality, tho, as means employed by the Church, this may refer to the influence supposed to be exerted by the public office or position of the person rather than by his private character. Let us begin by considering the influence of formulation aside from personality. Of course, for reasons given on page 262, the mere fact of being exerted aside from personality would tend to show that the effects upon faith of this influence can not be the most powerful possible. But this fact is to be considered under our next head. At present, let us consider the effects of formulation in itself. Doing so, we shall notice that its peculiarity is this: it presents for the substance that is to be accepted by what is termed faith that which is—not incidentally, as would be true of all such influence, but necessarily—a result of some mind's conscious action. Nothing can be formulated in either creeds or rituals of which this

can not be said. They always embody some conclusion that certain men have reached as a result of their own thinking; and it is this conclusion that furnishes the premise, accepted through faith, from which a mind according to methods indicated on page 147, subconsciously develops its own thought and tendency to action. This is the same as to say that formulation aims to do for minds framed to work subconsciously a large part, at least, of that work which may legitimately be termed their own. Formulation seeks, so far as it can, to prevent these minds from drawing their own conclusions. It attempts to suppress and keep dormant, in a large degree at least, that in a man which, more nearly than anything else of which we know, constitutes the essence of spiritual activity (see page 55). Thus it may be said that faith in creeds or rites—if indeed it can be rightly termed faith—is inevitably connected with a lack of faith in the human mind or spirit; and, so, why not also in the Creator that made this spirit what it is?

But more than this can be said against a phase of faith awakened through the agency of formulation. It is one thing, when influencing a man through faith, to present to subconscious intellection for logical development well-ascertained facts. It is another very different thing to present for this certain inferences that men have consciously drawn from these facts. The reason for saying this is that these latter—the inferences—are almost never any more than very partially true.

They are influenced not alone by the premise from which they have been deduced, and by its legitimate unfoldment in subconsciousness (see page 152), but also by many surrounding conditions that are seen or heard during the time when the premise is in process of unfoldment. Were we to tell a man, while in full possession of his consciousness, to act like the Emperor William, he might be so influenced by surrounding persons and things and by his relations to them that, altho a good mimic, his representation would be quite incomplete, and, at the best, perhaps, appear like a caricature. But were we to hypnotize him, and leave the whole work to be done by subconscious mentality, the imitation throughout would be as perfect as a perfect memory and power of personation could make it. (see page 113). So if we try to make a man, while in full possession of his consciousness, act out the principles of the golden rule, he will go to his place of business, and perceive, in the real world about him, so many circumstances and conditions almost necessarily modifying the possibility of the exact fulfilment of this rule that in little that he does can its regulative influence be recognized. But if we hypnotize him, and leave the result to subconscious mentality, almost everything that he appears to think or to wish will, probably, be in complete accord with this rule's strict application (see page 113). What dogmatism does is to take inferences drawn by one mind consciously, and therefore more or less erroneously, and make

these the premises from which another mind, so far as allowed to work at all, must subconsciously draw its conclusions. What must be the result? What but error, error necessarily and inevitably?

This can be shown by noticing the influence of almost any doctrine of the Church. For the present, two illustrations will suffice. Take the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, and what is said of them in the Scriptures. If, on the one hand, these be presented without any dogmatic inferences that men have drawn from them and seek to enforce on others, subconscious intellection, in most cases, will accept as a premise the general suggestion of spiritual communion with a spiritual Lord, and develop it logically in such a way as not to interfere with the exercise of sufficient intelligence to recognize that many other things besides partaking of these elements are necessary in order to bring one into full possession of all that there is in the Christian life. But if, on the other hand, that which the mind accepts as a premise be the dogma which men have formulated as a result, not of inner subconscious mental processes, but of outer considerations consciously perceived, such as the supposed practical necessity of making men think it absolutely essential to partake of the elements—the dogma to the effect that the bread and wine are transformed literally into the body and blood of the Christ—then through the agency of faith the resulting conception held in subconsciousness as a guiding principle over the communicant's opinion and

conduct will be the conviction that he has taken into his body for digestion a portion of the Lord's body; and that this, of itself, without further effort on his own part, will leaven the whole lump of his nature and make it like his Lord's. Nor is this kind of influence peculiar to a single church. In connection with dogmas very different from the one just mentioned, there is often sung, especially in revival meetings, the following:

"Nothing either great or small  
Remains for me to do ;  
Jesus died and paid it all,  
All the debt I owe."

Here again, if the dogmatic wording in this form be not the premise presented to his mind, a man will have no difficulty in recognizing that other considerations are necessary in order to express the whole truth; and he will try to discern what this truth is, and let it alone develop that which in his inner nature prompts to opinion and conduct. But if his faith accept as the premise to be developed by subconscious logic no more than is formulated in these verses, he will be impelled to the exact level of religious attainment, and no higher, than the logical conclusion to be drawn from the statement contained in them and from it alone. The result will be an ideal of Christian life supposed to be satisfied by an endeavor to do

"Nothing either great or small.

Now let us turn from the influence supposed by the Church to be exerted upon faith by the formulation of

opinions as exprest in dogmatic creeds or rituals to that supposed to be exerted by personality. As said before on page 262, the Church usually is apt to connect this influence with that exerted by official position rather than by private character. How seldom is the priest considered to be an exemplifier of a mode of life that all men are expected to follow! Are there any who suppose that his celibacy, or his costume, or many other of his peculiarities are to be imitated by people in general? Is it not true that, in almost all of his relations to others, he appears mainly in the rôle of a dictator of a mode of life to be led not by himself, but by them? Notice, however, that, according to the inferences logically following upon the line of thought already presented, anything tending to separate him in appearance or pursuits from those to whom he is supposed to minister must tend to lessen his influence over their spiritual natures. These are chiefly influenced, as shown on page 270, by that which induces to imitation. Anything therefore which can not be imitated, or even expected to be imitated, is, owing to its very nature, unfitted to influence the spirit in the highest degree possible. It is strange that the unreformed churches have never recognized, for instance, that the main reason for such good as they have done has been traceable less to the dictation and domineering of their higher clergy, who have stood apart from the masses, than to the pale faces of their priests and nuns, who, notwithstanding a garb that has tended somewhat in the



other direction, have, nevertheless, made themselves one with the people, and seemed to spend their lives in going about among them and "doing good" (Acts 10; 38). It is still more strange that these churches have never recognized to what extent their ignoring of this influence of personal character, and the substituting, for faith awakened to activity by it, a trust supposed to be awakened by mere dogmas and decrees, by mere ordinances and officials, has tended to throw into the shade that faith awakened by the personality of the Christ—or, as one might say, faith in the Spirit of the Christ—which alone can be at the basis of spiritual development in his follower. How can the intelligent, not to say the enlightened, suppose that souls when hungering for the bread of spiritual life can be sated with the stones of a material altar; or when aspiring for kinship with the Master of Nazareth, can imagine this desire fulfilled while merely witnessing the processions and performances of others like themselves! Such conceptions as these are all the more remarkable in view of a fact which every student of human nature knows. This is the fact that no regeneration of character is possible except in the degree in which the subject of it has, in some way, obtained an ideal of what his life should be that is higher and purer than the one that he already possesses. But whence can come this ideal; in fact, any ideal? It is always the creation of the mind that conceives it. For this, if for no other reason, it can never be said to be dictated from the

outside. It is never more than suggested from this; then, afterward, as a result of subconscious logic, it is developed within.

This fact shows us why it is that what is known of the character and life of the Christ and of the effects of his work in his own and subsequent ages, slight as some may deem the world's amount of accurate information with reference to these, is nevertheless sufficient for the purposes intended. Let it be granted that men, in enthroning him, as they have done, have robed him in the garments of their own ideality. The texture of this has been woven in the subconscious nature from threads of evidence suggestive of such intrinsic loftiness and love that the ideal resulting has been almost infinitely inspiring to the individual and the race.

The fact just considered shows us again why this ideal, and the faith which alone can make men strive to realize it, never can do all that they are fitted to do for a mind except when this is left free to develop thought and action according to its own subconscious promptings. As indicated on page 136, to interfere with this free development is to subject the mind to the rule of the material instead of the spiritual. But if the mind be left free, what then? Then we must have outward expressions of spiritual faith that differ both from one another and from the forms that gave the suggestions from which they were developed. If a man were a parrot, it might be enough for him to learn to repeat by rote the words of a creed. If he were an ape, it

might be enough for him to imitate the actions of others in a ceremonial. But he is a man with a mind, and a mind—owing to the law controlling subconscious logical action—never gives forth that which has entered it in exactly the same form in which it has been received. No one can even plant a growing bush in soil and then draw it forth without finding some of the soil attached to its roots. Nor can he leave it in the ground for a season without its bearing limbs or leaves that change its appearance. How much less can one expect to plant seeds of thought in the mind, and—in case it be living—expect nothing to come forth different from that which has been placed in it!

In view of these facts, we may perceive an element of divineness in the Scriptures wholly overlooked often by those who insist upon its literal interpretation. It would be almost impossible to conceive of any number of ordinary men, with the tendency which almost all invariably manifest to become dictators or dogmatists, devising such a method of presenting truth as is found in the Old and New Testaments. Think only of the latter. How vaguely does it indicate any system of theology, or any form of ecclesiastical worship or government? Evidently the whole intention—so far as results can indicate intention—was to govern a man by giving expression to certain principles, and to leave him at liberty to develop from these such forms of thought and practise as commended themselves to his individual judgment. Yet, if this were the intention,

think how it has been thwarted! There have been times when no individual, even tho accepting the general facts underlying orthodoxy, was allowed to give expression of his personal interpretations of these, nor even to worship in any language other than that prescribed by authority. To-day, in many places, there is the same tendency. It seems neither Biblical nor rational. How can one justify the assuming of a right to use the machinery of the Church for this purpose? When a forest is dead, we may cut it up into houses and villages; but, while it is living, if we wish it to continue so, we must let it alone. If the religious tendency in man be a development of his natural constitution, just as is the case with the artistic or the scientific, then it must fulfil the same general laws; and it is impossible to expect, and irrational to plan, for a time when faith shall manifest in doctrine or practise anything resembling absolute uniformity.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### UNITY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS AFFECTED BY CONSIDERING SPIRITUAL TRUTH SUGGESTIVE

Principles Unfolded in the Preceding Chapter Can Be Applied in All Religions—What Are the Most Common and Universal Religious Conceptions—Communications from Bad and Good Spirits—Homage Appeasing the First, and Soliciting Favors from the Second, Who Are Often Supposed to Be Heroes and Ancestors—Formulation of Opinions Concerning These and Their Teachings Into Systems of Belief, as by Copernicus, Zoroaster, Buddha, Moses, Mohammed, and the Christ—Christianity Not Necessarily Antagonistic to Other Religions, as Shown by Its Holding Many Similar Beliefs—Acknowledging Certain of the Truths in These Religions Might Benefit Christianity—This Need Not Imply Acknowledging That Everything in Any Other System Is True—Nor Need It Throw Discredit Upon Missionary Effort, but Lead It to Emphasize in Christianity That which Is Lacking in Other Systems, and Is Essential in Its Own—Religious Unity—This Must Begin by First Acknowledging the Truth Common to All Religions.

There is a sense in which the statement made at the end of the preceding chapter may be applied not only to the various branches of the Christian Church, but to the various branches of religion in general. That any spiritual connection exists between all these, especially between all of them and one's own form of religion, is difficult for some men to perceive. But such a connection has already been suggested on page 129. In discussing it further, it is natural to begin by noticing the opinions held on the subject by the founders of Christianity at or near the time when it started. Few

occasions seem to have occurred in which to express such opinions; but when they did occur there is no doubt as to the meaning of the testimony which they present. In speaking, in Matt. 8; 10, 11, 12, of the Roman centurion who was an adherent neither of the Jewish religion nor of the new religion of the Christ, the latter declares, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out." Again, the Apostle Peter, in speaking, in Acts 10; 35, of Cornelius, another Roman centurion, who, like the one just mentioned, apparently knew very little of either the Jewish or the Christian religion, makes the affirmation that "in every nation he that feareth him [*i.e.*, God] and worketh righteousness is accepted with him"; and the Apostle Paul, in Acts 17; 23, speaking to the Greeks, who apparently had never before heard of Christianity, tells them that him (*i.e.*, the God) "whom ye ignorantly"—not refuse to worship, but—"worship, him declare I unto you." Limitations with reference to knowledge concerning religion, and mistakes with reference to religious conduct, these early founders of Christianity recognized in the so-called heathen religions, but they did not deny to any one of them in any place a certain degree of revelation and illumination. "When the Gentiles which have not the law," says Paul, Rom. 2; 14, 15,



“do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.” These quotations seem to show that the founders of Christianity had a theory different from those who, a century or two later, were terming all non-Christian conceptions false or devilish. It is important to emphasize, too, the fact that had they, or other early Christian missionaries, used such terms, or held a theory that necessitated their using them, they would have had harder work than they did have in converting the intelligent and loyal people of the world—those loyal to the traditions of their own families and races—to Christianity. The same principle may be applied to those who to-day are missionaries in foreign lands. Most Christians know what is meant by saying that the Christ becomes the Savior of a man, not by doing more for him than has already been done, but by being more for him, by being recognized as such. In the same way, he must become the Savior of mankind not by doing more than he has done for it, but by being more, and by being recognized as such. If the passage in Haggai 2; 7, “the desire of all nations shall come,” refer to the Christ, as Christians are given to saying, the effort of the Christian should be to reveal to the non-Christian in what sense the historic Christ is fitted to satisfy the religious desires and conceptions of all men.

In order to reveal this, it is important to find out, first, so far as possible, exactly what are the most common, because the most universal, religious desires and conceptions. Fortunately, it is not difficult in our day to determine this. The religious, as well as other developments of almost all people, have been quite thoroughly studied; and there are existing in our own time, in Africa, Asia, Australia, and America, races of the most primitive character, which, therefore, may be supposed to have the most primitive form of religion.

When we ask what this primitive form is, it seems, in all cases, to be very nearly the same. It is some form of spirit-worship; and the spirits that are worshiped are, as a rule, believed to be those that have lived on the earth and departed, and that survive in a more ethereal state. The belief in the survival of the spirit is indicated not merely by the fact that consultations are held with those who, in some mysterious way, are supposed to communicate with the dead, but by the well-nigh universal custom of burying with the dead certain of their belongings, which it is supposed that—so far as these can be turned into that which is spiritual—they may need and use in the ethereal life. In Christian communities, as intimated on page 75, this well-nigh universal belief in the survival of the spirit is often attributed to imagination. If by imagination, as thus used, be meant an experience seemingly seen or heard objectively, which, nevertheless, is really seen or heard only subjectively, the theory is plausible, and

psychologists are warranted in discussing it. But if, by imagination, in this case, be meant the faculty of the mind which causes a child or a man to build up images, as in reverie or poetry, or, as we ordinarily say, to fancy things, then we must reject the explanation as illogical. One consideration that renders it so was indicated on page 76. Another is the fact that an exactly identical conception of the life hereafter has been imprest in this way upon the minds of all men whatsoever, whether uncivilized or highly civilized, whether aboriginal Africans, Asians, Australians, Americans, or ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, or modern East Indians, Chinese, Japanese, or spiritists of Europe or America. It is difficult to believe that this uniformity of conception with reference to conditions in the other world is due to the exercise of what we ordinarily mean by imagination. If that were the case, each man who used his imagination, in order to originate a conception, would give us a different one. That this is so will appear upon examination of the avowed poetic and therefore confessedly imaginative statements in some of the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman writings, as well as of those of some of the early Christians, or of Dante, Milton, and Klopstock. The descriptions of all of these differ very greatly. But when we turn to primitive sources and find evidences that the reports received were, professedly, under hypnotic, trance, or clairvoyant conditions, then we usually find substantial agreement. This is not a mere unwarranted

statement that can not be proved. Any man wishing to prove it can do so by exercising no more patience, perseverance, caution, or judgment than would be necessary in searching for any other fact. All that is necessary is to make a study of reports of this kind communicated to oneself or collected from the testimony of others, and, whether originally given in English, French, German, East Indian, Chinese, or Japanese, these reports will be found in all essentials to coincide. Nor does it make any difference whether the descriptions of heaven and hell be given by a man who has been a lifelong student of science like Swedenborg, or by a half-idiot like a negro in an African forest. Through all, the outlines of the same heaven and hell can be distinctly recognized. This is no result that can be attributed to individual imagination. It must be attributed to a law universally fulfilled wherever there seems to be the slightest reason for supposing that we are getting the records of what is perceived by the subconscious or spiritual nature. The conditions, in this case, are such as to leave us only one of two possible conclusions. We must believe either that the truth is indicated in them, or else believe that the human mind has been so constructed as to produce for us a universal and stupendous lie.

Besides the recognition, in primitive religion, of the continued existence of the spirits of those who have left the earth, there is always a recognition of a difference in character between these spirits. Some are

thought to be evil, or, as spiritists prefer to put it, undeveloped; and some to be good, or highly developed. It is usually asserted, too, that the most highly developed seldom, if ever, communicate with men. The author is acquainted with one often consulting such sources who has assured him that the most convincing argument in favor of their trustworthiness is furnished him by the fact that his own father—a man of exceptional purity and reserve—has never been represented as being the source of such communications. This conclusion, perhaps, would be considered by most spiritists unwarranted. They usually are ready to admit that large parts of the so-called communications to individuals are frivolous and indicative of frivolous sources. But the claim is made that there are also indications of sources of an exceedingly elevating and inspiring character. The most common theory seems to be that spirits are not necessarily worse or better than can be found among those that are seen and heard in this world, and that whatever may come from them is address to the mind and is to be judged by the appeal that it makes to reason.

The recognition of a difference in character between spirits leads, very naturally, as will be perceived, to two forms of what may be termed homage, namely, that paid to evil spirits, and to good spirits. The evil are represented as needing to be appeased, lest they should do harm, and the good as deserving of solicitation because capable of conferring benefit. Both forms

of homage are found not only among uncivilized, but among civilized races. We have all heard of the hideous rites of North American Indians, but, even in countries like China and Japan, hideous images can be seen representing evil spirits before whom one can readily fancy that hideous rites alone would be in place. Only comparatively ignorant people are much influenced by fear of these evil spirits; but in both China and Japan many are seen apparently making them offerings. The homage given to good spirits usually assumes two forms, which, however, are closely connected. These two are the worship of heroes and of ancestors. In reading the Greek and Roman classics, we think mainly of hero-worship; but if we study their customs, we find that, in some cases, their penates, or household gods, were their own ancestors. In other cases the heroes whom they worshiped were men of ancient times and, being so, were also men from whom most of the people imagined that they themselves were descended. So with the ancestral worship of China and Japan. There is more hero-worship connected with it than we ordinarily suppose. The author himself has seen in Japan the caskets containing the remains of Shoguns, famous warriors, who died something like three hundred years ago, carried in procession and set opposite a long table at which, in supposed communion with them, the prominent characters of a province partook of a feast and enjoyed a performance of dancing and music. So the worship of



ancestors in Japan is connected with some worship also of heroes, this word *worship*, however, being, as a Buddhist priest assured the author, altogether too sacred a term to apply to a mere expression of a belief on the part of the people of a possibility of obtaining aid from ancestors pleased with all endeavors to carry out the traditions of their families.

These endeavors seem to lead necessarily, after a time, to more or less reasoning with reference to the real or supposed desires or designs of these ancestors. It is natural, therefore, that what is believed concerning them, or concerning the life most in accord with their supposed characters, should come, by certain more thoughtful and rational men, to be formulated in writing, just as in time such men come to formulate in writing all matters of common opinion. It is at this stage that many of the more intelligent people cease to be guided by seers or mediums, whose powers are apparently attributable as much to physical or nervous as to psychical or spiritual traits, and to be guided by the great thinkers. Of those of these thinkers who have had the most influence in their own and subsequent times, Confucius, while not denying, ignored the spiritual, believing that what humanity needed was a system of morality fitted to produce the best results in this material life, and that, if this system were formulated and practised here, it would, of itself, afford the best possible preparation for a spiritual life. Buddha, on the other hand, ignored the material world, confi-

ning himself to teaching methods of ridding the spirit from the influence of the body, and from interest in mere bodily pursuits. Zoroaster tried to balance the spiritual, or the good, against the bodily, or the evil, and seemed to think that, altho the former would ultimately triumph, the influence of each in this world is very nearly equal. Moses and Mohammed both directed attention to the spiritual, but to this, mainly, perhaps, as embodied in the material. The Christ directed attention to both, altho he separated them, admitting, however, their inseparability in this world; but, while doing so, he insisted that the spiritual should be considered supreme, and that to its direction and control the material, in all cases, should be subordinated.

It is unfortunate, in some regards, that Christianity was trained in its youth to the methods of the Roman Empire. In this latter, all will recall the emphasis given to written laws and government by force. Any system, perhaps, after existing for centuries surrounded almost exclusively by such methods would have been influenced to express its doctrines in written creeds and to manifest its discipline through ordained authority. Nor is it strange that the time came when any one who was outside the body acknowledging these doctrines, or controlled by this authority, should have been deemed outside the pale of that which was considered to be the kingdom of God. Nor is it strange that many, even in our own times, should hold the theory that Christianity, like the Roman

Empire with which it first marched to its victories, is necessarily in its very character antagonistic to other religions, and before it can obtain recognition for itself must obtain from its converts a repudiation of them. Some of our zealous missionaries—but, fortunately, not all of them (see page 73)—feel it to be their first duty to oppose such a belief as that in spirits, whether bad or good, or in paying homage to ancestors, or to the precepts of a Confucius, or the doctrines of a Buddha. But why? Those who lived in Biblical times certainly believed in spirits both bad and good, and that a man could communicate with them. Innumerable instances to prove this can be cited. Not only were evil spirits supposed to take possession of mind and body, and to need to be cast out, as related in Mark 5; 1–14; but good spirits were supposed to control and to make their subjects mediums of the truth (Gen. 41; 38: Num. 24; 2: 1 Sam. 19; 20: II. Chronicles 15; 1: Matt. 3; 16, etc.). We are told that two angels came to visit Lot (Gen. 19; 1); that one wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32; 24, 30); that one talked with Daniel (Dan. 9; 21), and that two appeared to three of the disciples (Matt. 17; 3). All the conditions of a modern seance are present in the story of the summoning of Saul by the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. 28; 7–25); and certain spiritists insist that similar conditions were realized in connection with the appearance of the crucified Christ to his disciples as related in John 20; 19–29.

Besides this, those who lived in Biblical times seem to have believed in something resembling homage rendered to ancestors. What was their Jehovah, if not the God of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 32; 9: Rom. 4; 2, 9, 12, 16)? Now if, in the early days of the Church, the accepting of these beliefs did not prevent one from accepting Christianity also, why should it do so in our own days? And how is it with accepting the teachings of the great religious leaders? A few years ago the author attended a recitation in ethics in the Doshisha, the college founded by the American Congregational missionaries in Kobé, Japan. The text-book from which the students were reciting was by Confucius. Evidently the missionaries had found that there was no greater antagonism between his system and Christianity than the Apostle Paul had found between Christianity and Platonism (Acts 17; 23). If the reader will turn back to page 203, he will find indicated in what sense it may be true that there is much less antagonism than is sometimes supposed between the same system and Buddhism or Mohammedanism. Nor is there any reason for holding that even reincarnation, as taught by the one, or a material heaven, as pictured by the other—tho neither doctrine, of course, in its details—is necessarily inconsistent with the system of the Gospel (Mark 9; 11-13: Rev. 21; 1, 2).

There is no doubt, too, that by acknowledging the possibility that truth may be contained in certain of

these systems Christianity itself might be greatly benefited. If Christians considered possible the continued life and activity of spirits, the materialism of Western civilization might be perceptibly diminished; if they considered possible such a condition as obsession by evil spirits, a surrender to the promptings of what seem mainly, but may not be solely, men's own passions and appetites might be considered more dangerous than at present. If, with Confucius, they imagined that the principles of conduct should be the same as applied either to material or to spiritual life, they might realize the importance in the present of exercising more unselfishness and self-control. If, with the Buddha, they imagined the conditions of life hereafter to be a necessary and normal result of the life lived here, they might be more anxious than they are now to live uprightly and benevolently in this world. If, with Zoroaster, they gave due weight to the well-nigh equal power of evil and of good, they might be more careful to avoid coming under the power of the former. If, with Moses and Mohammed, they gave due weight to the inexorable fulfilment of law, they might be more careful to study and understand the laws of their own physical as well as moral being.

All this is not the same as to say that any of these systems are true in all of their ramifications. What system is? Certainly not Christianity as it has been developed. But for these defects in it we do not,

most of us, think it necessary to reject it wholly. What intelligent Christians do is to allow themselves to differ with reference to many things, which may be considered non-essential, if only they can agree with reference to a few things which may be considered essential. It has come to be recognized that the question of being a Christian or not is determined not by the whole contents or results of one's thought, feeling or action, but by the emphasis given to certain of these. Why should not a similar test be applied to the adherents not only of the Christian, but of every religion?

The objection most frequently urged against this view is that it throws discredit upon Christian missionary effort, because it virtually renders it unnecessary. But why? If we believe in any kind of social or educational reform, it is our duty to proclaim our opinion, and to advance the application of our methods. Why should we not recognize that similar action is more imperative as applied to the much more important matter of religion? The only logical inferences to be drawn from the line of thought just presented are that, in advocating his own religion, one should try, first, to exercise charity toward others and not argue against any tenet of their religion that does not clearly conflict with some tenet that is essential to his own; and, second, to present to them from his religion that only which it is clear that other religions do not contain. Now what may Christianity



be said to contain which other religions do not? We can not answer this question by saying that it is a church with a Bible, or with a set of dogmas or creeds, or with officials, rites, or rituals. Other systems have all these, or what corresponds to them. What Christianity has that other systems have not is this—a new truth, but new mainly because revealed according to a new method; that is, primarily, through the Christ, and, secondarily, through Christians who believe that, in some mysterious way, because of the influence upon them of his life and death, they are inspired and guided so that, while living in the world, and entering into all its legitimate pursuits and pleasures, they nevertheless can make their earthly life a representation to others and a foretaste for themselves of a spiritual life hereafter. In order to perceive that this is that which is peculiar to Christianity, it is not necessary to believe the exact accuracy of every account in the Scriptures; it may be said that it is not even necessary to accept as wise everything that is represented as having been done or said by the Christ. All that is necessary is to recognize the fact that his whole mission, as in his words, whether blessing little children or cursing money-changers; or as in his deeds, whether dining with publicans and sinners or praying with his disciples, whether receiving the plaudits of the multitudes because the son of David or allowing himself to be sacrificed on the cross, had this end in view—to manifest the life of love, and through doing this,

to draw all men into likeness with himself. His followers are Christians in the degree, and in the degree alone, in which they live, not exactly in the same particular way, but according to the same general method, always ready to sacrifice their own plans and profits, and, if absolutely necessary, their lives for the benefit of their fellows.

Does any one suppose that there are any large number of Confucianists, Buddhists, Parsees, Hebrews, Mohammedans, or Spiritists who would reject Christianity if they could be brought to believe this to be the essential part of it? And, if influenced not to reject it, would it be long before very many would be brought to acknowledge in the Christ as well as within themselves the power of that vague something which is termed the spiritual? In fact, would it be long before they would have developed out of their own thinking, but in a spontaneous way and in a personal form, some of the very dogmas of the most orthodox Christianity which now they reject because finding them presented by way of dictation and authority instead of suggestion?

This question causes one to feel that the time has come for the world to recognize a fact which, at first, seems paradoxical. It is this, that, as applied to all different religions, nothing except the broadest charity, which not only allows but welcomes divergences, can ever lead to the acceptance by all men of a single religion. As was said on page 227, no two individuals

can have unity of spirit except in the degree in which, in the presence of the other, each is free, and feels free, to say and to do what he chooses. This is so with reference to all men associating in ordinary intercourse. Why should it not be so with reference to those associating in religion. Once, when the author was young, and more uncharitably disposed than at present, he traveled for a time in Europe with a strenuous Unitarian. This man and himself seemed in complete religious accord—*i.e.*, unity of spirit—except when tempted into a controversy. Then they seemed as wide apart as the poles. After a time both tried to analyze the reason for this, and concluded that, in such cases, the selfish desire to justify the controversy caused each to weigh down his side of the argument with more and more of his own self-drawn deductions, thus making his statements more and more individual and peculiar, till the thoughts expressed were selected for use for the very reason that they were widely separated. No one ever brought about spiritual unity by controversy, but through sympathy, and the first condition of sympathy is to discover unity beneath individual difference.

Enough was said on page 129 to indicate in what sense one may hold that there are truths common to all religions. These truths, when one's main object is to bring about religious unity, need to be acknowledged. In some countries they are already acknowledged. This may be said to be the case to an unusual

degree in Japan—that country from which, to-day, all of the rest of the world seem to be deriving so many useful lessons. These lessons are derived not merely because of Japan's recent military successes, but because of the characteristics of spirit and mind which rendered these successes possible. More than any other nation of which history gives an account, Japan—to judge at least from its course during the last fifty years—seems to be governed by principles of rationality. Within that time many in the higher classes, who formerly were the only ones allowed to bear arms, influenced by a desire to secure the good of the country, have, of their own initiative, resigned their positions of influence, and most of their exclusive rights and privileges, thus virtually abolishing caste. Besides this, the whole nation has voluntarily laid aside the governmental, educational, and, to some extent, the social traditions of centuries in order to adopt what the experiences of other nations have proved to be best for a people. If the Japanese rationality be the result of a Confucian or a Buddhist religion, for the sake of humanity let us all become Confucianists or Buddhists! But this is not necessary. What we need, in order to equal them in mental breadth, is not the same beliefs that they have, but the same attitude of mind toward all beliefs. In that country, Confucianists, Buddhists, and Christians can meet together and exchange views, and, when they part, can feel that they have been communing with a spirit that has united

them. What spirit? Are we not justified in believing it to be the spirit of that Creative Life which prompts each, and which therefore, if accepted as a guide, would allow each to give truthful expression to that which is revealed within his own nature. If all men be the offspring of the same divine source, and if justice and impartiality characterize this source, there must be some truth lodged with each individual, and some mode of life manifested by him that is worthy of the notice and regard of all others. If this be true in any sphere, it must be true also in that of religion.

## CHAPTER XIV

### CERTAIN OTHER PROBLEMS MADE SOLVABLE BY THE THEORY PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK

Reconciliation Between the Claims of Inspiration and Apparent Inaccuracy and Contradiction in the Text Giving It Expression—Between the Claims of Absolute, Eternal, and Infinite Truth and the Apparent Impossibility of Stating or Determining This; Pragmatism—In What Sense, Value, or Worth, Emphasized in Pragmatism, Is a Test of Truth—Difference Between Knowledge Which Is Applied to a Part and Faith Which Is Applied to a Whole—Illustration—Difference Between This View and That of Pragmatism—Reconciliation Between the Full Acceptance of Revealed Truth and the Full Exercise of Reason—Between Liberality of Thought and Honest Acceptance of the Christian System, Applied to Those Not Members of the Church—To Scientists—Applied to Members of the Church—Reconciliation Between Complete Adherence to One's Own Religious Views and Complete Toleration of the Views of Others—Between Others' Acceptance of the Truth in One's Own System and Conservation of the Truth in Theirs—Between Rationality or Intelligence and Spirituality or Faith—The Material and the Spiritual—Spirituality—If Inspired Truth Be Suggestive, Spirituality and Faith Can Follow It with No Lessening of the Exercise of Intelligence and Reason—Conclusion.

It seems fitting in this closing chapter to indicate—partly by way of recapitulation and partly by way of supplement—some of the problems which suggested the preparation of this volume, and which the author hopes that it may prove instrumental in solving. The first of these problems is, of course, the initial one indicated in the Introduction, namely, how to reconcile the claims of an inspired religious writing with the



existence of apparent inaccuracy and even contradiction in certain details of its statements. What better answer to this question could be found than the one given in this volume? It has been shown that, when a man is inspired, the very conditions necessitate that whatever is revealed should affect, first, the inner or subconscious realm of his mind; that whatever may be received in this inner or subconscious region influences both it and the outer, or conscious realm, by way of suggestion; and that whatever influences by way of suggestion must, from its very nature, leave the outer or conscious realm free to express itself according to methods dominated by its own inherited or acquired intelligence. It follows logically from all this that we have no reason to expect to find evidences of inspiration in the specific details of the expression, except so far as, indirectly, they may indicate the general trend of that which is expressed. Specific details can never be supposed to be a necessary part of that which is merely suggested. On the contrary, they are often originated solely by the particular human mind which happens to be the agent of the communication. They are not logically attributable to the spirit that inspired it. It seems important to add now that to make these statements is really to do no more than to formulate a principle in accordance with which the very persons who object to it are constantly acting. Compare the statement in 1 Cor. 15; 22, "For as in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive," with the following from Matt.

25; 46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Compare also Rom. 10; 13, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," with Matt. 7; 21, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is impossible that any mind should accept, in a literal sense, such apparently contradictory statements. In each case one or both of the two must be accepted as a partial statement of a general truth; and it is the general truth alone that is believed to be inspired. Why should not all theologians frankly admit this? If they did so, they would have a theory which would fully explain all the facts. Moreover, because the conditions of the workings of subconscious mentality have been, as in hypnotism, scientifically determined, the explanation would be scientific, and, better than all, it would be of such a nature as to render it possible for a rational thinker to believe both that the source of the inspired suggestion may itself be absolutely infallible, and also that the expression of it, owing to the many limitations of the human medium through which it must be received, may be ambiguous and apparently inaccurate and contradictory. The exact fact seems to be that the spiritual, which is infinite in its nature, necessarily becomes finite when limited, or—what is the same thing—made definite by being exprest—and, too often, supprest—in terms applicable to only material conditions (see page 142). Therefore spiritual truth can be apprehended in the degree alone in

which it is recognized to be—not dictatorial in form, but—suggestive.

What has just been said will indicate the solution by our theory of another problem which is, perhaps, the most important now agitating theological circles. It is this—how to reconcile the claims upon us of what one must suppose to be fundamental truth with the apparent impossibility of stating, or even of determining, this so as to satisfy, for any length of time, the demands of reason and experience. The endeavor to solve this problem has, of late, given rise to what is termed *pragmatism*. This term is widely applied to many methods, only a few of which can be adequately considered now. For instance, it has been used as synonymous with that “practicality” upon which very many philosophers of the past have insisted—*i.e.*, with the application of common sense to philosophical discussion, and the acceptance of a theory that, in view of all possible conditions, will “work.” When the term is used with this meaning, its applications are so broad that few can oppose the conceptions involved in it without seeming to reject what they themselves accept. But there is a narrower meaning of the term. As thus employed, especially when, as thus employed, it is applied to theological questions, it seems to be based upon a kind of agnosticism exercised less with reference to the existence or attributes of the Almighty, than to truth so far as, like the Almighty, this may be supposed to be absolute, eternal, and

infinite. According to Professor J. M. Sterrett, in his "Freedom of Authority," page 311, pragmatism "seems to be an extension of the worth-judgments of the Ritschlians to the field of all knowledge." Developed philosophically by Professors Howson, James, and Schiller, respectively, in their volumes entitled "The Limits of Evolution, and Other Essays," "The Will to Believe, and Other Essays," and "Humanism, Philosophical Essays"; and, theologically, by Messrs. Sebatier, Harnack, and Loisy, respectively, in their volumes entitled "Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion," "What is Christianity," and "L'Évangile et L'Église," pragmatism assumes that men do, and, therefore, must, determine the truth in any principle by noticing its practical effects in human life. We are to accept the dogmas and discipline of the Church, for instance, because they have been proved to be beneficial to mankind. We are to accept them, tentatively, at least, for this reason alone, irrespective of any question with reference to the absolute, infinite, or eternal nature of the truth which they represent, which truth we can not, or, at least, we do not know. With reference to it, we must remain agnostics. There is, of course, much justification in applying to any object of observation in this world the principle, "ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7; 16). But, as applied where one is in search for truth, can this be considered in any other light than as a "working principle" to be used merely like an hypothesis in

order to aid in the discovery of something more certain? Used in this way, as an hypothesis, there can be no objection to accepting such a theory and adopting such a method as seems to secure the best practical results. To do this is merely to act rationally. But for the pragmatist to go further; for him to suggest, if not suppose, that the hypothesis, because it works well, is, in any sense, for this reason alone, all that one can or need know of absolute truth is to make the same mistake intellectually as is made morally by those who suggest that because they are sincere, because they are obeying the dictates of conscience, they are absolutely right. As most of us know, they are usually not. On the contrary, they are often manifesting the same attitude of mind which the bigots and persecutors of all the ages have proved to be absolutely wrong. Why? What, in such cases, is the mistake? Should these bigots and persecutors have been insincere? Should they have violated their own consciences? Certainly not. The first element of morality consists in having faith in the dictates of one's own conscience. But, in connection with having this faith, they should also have recognized that their consciences belong not to others, or to the Almighty, but to themselves alone; and, by consequence, merely impel them to live true to what appears to be best to their own intelligence and sympathy. This recognition would have led them not to be untrue to self, but, in addition to being true, to

strive to increase their knowledge and love till, finally, if possible, all their thoughts and emotions should become true also to everything wisest and best by which self is surrounded and can be influenced.

So with the theory that the pragmatist has found to be of "value." If it have been proved to be this, a man, as a rational being, should value it. But how? As something practically useful, but not necessarily, as a matter of theory, truthful. To try to accept it in the latter way involves making three mistakes. The first consists in confounding the beneficial with the best. Fifty years ago, almost everybody held the opinion that tuberculosis was not a contagious, but an inherited disease. The opinion was beneficial. It prevented people from running away from their friends and relatives who needed nursing. But the opinion was not true. Tho not contagious through ordinary breath or touch, the disease is contagious through the dried expectorations which may fill the air that one breathes, and thus come to touch his lungs. The second mistake of those considering the useful to be the truthful lies in confounding the relative with the absolute—that which seems true to the results of one's own experience with that which is true to universal experience. Of course, the two are not identical. There must be some broader test of truth than that which is determined by the knowledge or judgment of a single individual. The third mistake, closely connected with both the others, lies in con-



founding the methods of faith with the methods of knowledge. All the essays in the "Will to Believe," by Professor James, would have been more effective logically, as well as religiously, if he had recognized this distinction; if, instead of intimating that partial information, because useful, may be true, he had frankly admitted that it may or may not be true, but, because useful, should be utilized, on the ground that a man needing knowledge should have faith to act according to the amount of knowledge, tho limited, that has been given him; and that the man needing light should have faith to follow after as much light, even tho limited, as he has the good fortune to see. The fact seems to be that we mortals are always living, as it were, in a twilight where that which can bring full day is under the horizon. Nevertheless, we can see a few things near at hand; and toward them we can walk according to knowledge. But, besides these, there are other things that loom dimly in the distance; and with them comes often the promise, far away, of a great light. This does not make our present pathway clear, but it suggests the direction that we should take in order to reach a clear pathway. If we follow in this direction, we are rewarded in two ways: first, by getting nearer to the light; and, second, by learning from experience how to get along safely with such little light as we have. Neither of these results, when applied to a man's search for truth, corresponds exactly to that which is logically inferable

from what is said by the adherents of pragmatism. The man who is constantly hoping to attain truth or who is constantly learning to do without it, is by no means in the same attitude of mind as the man who surmises that he has truth, or that no one can get along unless he has it. Unlike the latter, the former accepts suggestions merely as such; and then, after the manner of hypnotism (see page 269), lets his subconscious intellection add its own logical conclusions.

The failure to recognize that the faith (see page 274) awakened and determined by such conclusions is normal and necessary in mental action is perhaps the chief defect in Kant's philosophy. Had Professor James recognized this, he might have made the lesson that he desired to impress seem less original, but, at the same time, he would have made it seem more acceptable. This is so because it could then have been proved to conform to the precepts and the theories of almost all the foremost philosophers of all the ages. What has always been their fundamental method? When brought face to face with the phenomena of matter or of mind, what have they done? They have analyzed the different effects in each; they have traced them backward, step by step, to their primary elements, and when these have been found, and often not till then, they have compared the first appearances with others in which the effects of the same elements are visible. And why have they done this? Is there any better answer than that of Sir William Hamilton in

one of his "Lectures on Metaphysics"? "The mind," he says, "can not conceive that anything that begins to be is anything more than a new modification of pre-existent elements; it is unable to view any individual thing as other than a link in the mighty chain of being; and every isolated object is viewed by it only as a fragment which to be known must be known in connection with the whole of which it constitutes a part." In other words, according to this writer, the answer to our question is that these philosophers proceed as they do because they have a conception of a whole, of an ideal whole, as we might say, tho in reality only a few parts are perceptible. But what is the nature of this ideal, and whence is it obtained? Its nature is the same as that of an ideal in religion or in art; and it is obtained just as is an ideal in these—*i.e.*, through faith and imagination. To show this, let us take an elementary conception, and trace it to a condition in which it passes into what we term a general law or, as explained in Chapter I, a general truth of science.

If one have been so circumstanced that he has never known of more than one death, he may say, "A man appeared for a little while and then vanished." This is not an expression of faith or of imagination; it is the statement of a fact, and, so far as it goes, of a result of investigation. But after the observation of many deaths he may make the statement general. He may say, "A man appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth." Here is a result of investigation which

has had added to it a result of faith. The general statement is made because the lives of many persons have been observed, and have all manifested the tendency indicated. Again, joining to his observations of men an observation of a single material appearance, one may say: "Man is a vapor; he appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth." Here we have a result of faith and—because we have two factors of a comparison both indicated, namely, man and vapor—a result also of imagination. Once more, observing a similar tendency not alone in man and in vapor, but in many other things, one may make his statement universal. He may say: "All life is a vapor"; "The things that are seen are temporal"; "This life's a dream, an empty show." But notice that just as soon as he makes his statement universal, even tho his surmisal be based upon such wide observations of life and its methods that his words have almost the accuracy of scientific conclusions, nevertheless he has gone, still more decidedly than in the cases previously mentioned, outside the realm of investigation or knowledge. It is impossible that one should investigate all the objects, events, or experiences to which a so-called universal law can apply. He can associate it with all of them so far only as he exercises faith, and, by imagination, conceives that what is true of the part is true of the whole; or, to express this differently, conceives of the part as imaging the whole.

This conception of the result is very different, and

leads to a very different effect upon thought and action, from that which seems to be induced by pragmatism. Apparently, the logical influence of the latter is—as, indeed, its advocates themselves claim—to make a mind more or less satisfied with the degree of truth attained, and therefore with existing conditions in society, state, and church. The conception advanced in the paragraph preceding this can do no more than incline the mind toward an acceptance of these as tentative, perhaps, but probably trustworthy guides toward something, conceived to be similar, to which they may lead. This is an attitude of mind that is characterized at once by humility in view of one's own limitations, by faith in view of one's own inward impulses, and by an unquenchable thirst for progress in all that makes for enlightenment and betterment. Nothing but continued search for truth can satisfy a mind anxious to attain it, and yet always conscious that it has not been attained. It is needless to point out to what extent the conception of inspiration as being suggestive in its tendency harmonizes with this attitude of mind and develops it, at once dealing with the problem which pragmatism is intended to solve, and doing it in such a way as not to lessen but to increase the stimulating effect of those intimations which, for the season, are allowed to hold the place of truth. The only method through which the mind can accept a suggestion is through thinking about that which is suggested. The more this is thought about,

even if never discovered, the more elevating and enlarging, if it be absolute, infinite, and eternal, will be its influence. If this be so—and who can deny it?—have we not realized exactly the conditions fitted to give that discipline and development which all the wisest and best have believed to be the design of every experience in this earthly life?

This thought leads us to recognize that the theory here presented can enable us to solve another problem—one as old as the oldest religion, and yet freshly presented for the solution of every individual of the present the moment that he arrives at an age where he begins to think for himself. This problem is, how to reconcile the full acceptance of revealed truth with the full exercise of one's own reason as directed to its conclusions by the results of conscience, insight, experience, and logical processes. There is no satisfactory answer to this question for any one who, in all cases, accepts what is supposed to be the expression of revealed truth as true in a literal, explicit, dogmatic, dictatorial, infallible sense. Nothing can be accepted in this sense except by one who, so far as concerns the interpretation of the particular expression involved, has waived the exercise of his own reason. Nevertheless, many have been persuaded that they should do this. The result that follows, when they do not think at all for themselves, is superstition; when they think in part for themselves, but from dictated premises, bigotry; and when they think wholly for themselves,



hypocrisy. Through all three conditions, moreover, which are all more or less blended, the mind is being forced to do that which it can not do if acting naturally; in other words, if acting in accordance with the laws of its Creator, which is the same thing as to say if acting religiously. The mind is not acting naturally, because minds, as minds, can receive nothing except as they think it; and they can not think anything to be which to their own thought or reason appears not to be. This is a fact practically acknowledged by every Church in which there is preaching, the aim of which is always to prove that the dogmas and practises enjoined by the Church are in conformity with those enjoined by reason. Why has it been so seldom recognized that an effect of exactly the same kind should be the aim of all the ordinances of the Church? How could this be recognized? By accepting, as applied to the original revelation and to all ecclesiastical developments of it, this theory with reference to the suggestive character of truth. The only way in which a mind can be influenced by that which is clearly felt to be suggestive is through the thought, and the endeavor to carry into logical processes the thought, which the suggestion occasions. According to the theory of this book, therefore, the very acceptance of revelation as a guide to life involves the use of reason. Nothing that is suggested can appear to be essential except so far as it appears to be in conformity with reason. To some this statement will seem radical and revolutionary.

But it merely formulates and places upon a philosophical basis the principle upon which ninety-nine out of every hundred intelligent Christians are constantly acting. Is it not desirable that they should know what this principle is, and, besides knowing it, be able to defend it?

This thought naturally suggests another problem to which the theory presented in this book affords a satisfactory solution. This is, how to reconcile liberality and independence of view in Christianity with an honest acceptance of its system as a whole. This is an exceedingly practical question. We all know men of great ability and integrity—Abraham Lincoln\* and John Hay are prominent representatives of the type—who, while regular attendants upon some Christian Church and supporters of it, and apparently interested in all its efforts for the betterment of the world, nevertheless are not what are called members of the Church, or communicants. No one can fail to perceive that if they were, this fact would make them much more influential than they are in advancing the form of religion represented by the Church. Nevertheless, when they

\* Lincoln's only published utterance concerning church-membership has been recently quoted thus by General Horatio C. King in an article in *The Christian Work and Evangelist*, of New York: "I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confession of Faith. Whenever any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church I will join with all my heart and all my soul."

tell us, as they do, that they stand aloof from it, because of certain statements in the confessions to which the Church requires assent before admitting to membership, which statements their minds can not accept, we feel that such men are intellectually justified in remaining aloof from it. We are presented, therefore, with the strange anomaly of thinking that men are doing right at the same time that we know that they are not exerting as distinctive a religious influence as they might exert. If a man be ever right in not doing anything, it must be because of something wrong in that which he is expected to do. In this case, what is he expected to do?—To say that he accepts certain statements as explicit, dictatorial expressions of the truth. Suppose that, instead of this, he were expected to accept them merely as suggestive expressions. If so, he would be expected to do no more than he is already doing. It is because he believes in the general truth represented by the Church, tho not in all its special claims, that he is already an attendant upon its services and a contributor to its practical work. Might it not be wise for the Church to weigh carefully the conditions that conform to the requirements of earnest and really religious men of this character?

The men just mentioned are supporters of the Church because of the practical good that they perceive it to be accomplishing in the world. On account of this, they waive their intellectual objections to some of its doctrines. But there are other men, equally

upright and religious, who apparently consider it wrong to aid in any way an institution, however practically beneficial, the doctrines of which do not conform to their conceptions. These are mainly men of scientific training, who, in the search for truth, demand above all things accuracy, and can not accept any statements that appear to be in the least degree inaccurate. One of these called the author's attention, a few months ago, to what he termed the "absurd and humiliating" discussion that had recently taken place in a convention of a certain religious body. "Apparently," he said, "not one of its members knew or could state exactly what he believed." "Could you yourself do that?" he was asked. "No," he answered, "but I don't pretend that I could; they do." This answer explained the situation exactly—the reason why he and the Church were not at one, as well as the right method of making them so. In fact, being a religious man, he and the delegates to that convention were possibly in actual agreement. On his own part, he was ready to admit, in unequivocal terms, that he could not give an exact statement of his religious beliefs. These delegates, according to what they had said in their convention, were also ready on their part to admit the same. Why, therefore, did he imagine himself, and why did they imagine him, at total variance from the belief of the Church? So far as he was concerned, this was because he had false conceptions, and so far as the Church was concerned, because it had

conveyed to him false conceptions, of the degree of accuracy with which that which is termed revealed truth is, or can be, exprest. Had both recognized the suggestive character of this expression, both would have been in possession of a great fundamental principle that would have made it logically possible for the scientist to be a churchman, and for the Church to have welcomed the scientist. He would have recognized that revealed truth is related to religion exactly as what are termed the laws of gravitation, or of evolution, are related to science. They are merely suggested, but, because strongly suggested, they are often allowed to determine scientific beliefs (see pages 314-317). But they can not be accurately proved. He would have found, therefore, that there was neither a logical nor an analogical argument justifying him in wholly separating himself from a church whose practical effects proved it to be of positive benefit to the world; and the Church, on the other hand, would have gained the influence of a man whose conscientious and scrupulous regard for the truth would have greatly enhanced its influence with minds of a similar character; who, as things are, are frequently inclined, as he was, to deem the exprest attitude of representatives of the Church "absurd and humiliating," if not hypocritical.

This theory of suggestion is needed, not only by those who are outside of the Church, but, still more perhaps, by those who are inside of it. The author once knew



an unusually talented and promising theological student. At the end of his course he found himself unable to preach either in the Church in which he had been educated, or in any other Church. He could not accept the whole of any of the formulated creeds, one seeming to assert, and another to deny, too much. His theological professors argued with him; they told him that his mind was too critical; and, tho they did not say so, they evidently thought that it was too conscientious. They told him that he need not accept every specific statement or word of the confession of the Church—only the general system unfolded in it. They evidently told him this because feeling vaguely, tho not divining clearly, some such conception of revealed truth as is brought out in this volume. Nevertheless, as this truth had never been formulated or formally accepted by their church, the student whom they were seeking to influence could not reconcile their argument with honest adherence to their own profest principles. As he said once, “I fail to see how one who calls himself a liberal Christian can be anything but a hypocrit.” The proportion of ordinary preachers who are liberal Christians is much greater than of theological professors. To the kind of mind represented by this theological student—inflexibly logical in its processes—all such preachers—and they include many of the most honest and earnest that the world holds—appear to be hypocrits. Could anything be more important for them, or for the many whom they



might influence for good, than to have proved, and generally accepted, a theory such as is unfolded in this book? According to this theory, liberal Christianity is the only logical Christianity—the only system consistent with a clear understanding of the suggestive nature of all truth that is inspired.

The connection will be recognized between what has just been said and another problem for which the theory of this book furnishes a solution. It concerns the methods in which one can reconcile complete adherence to his own religious opinions with complete toleration for those of others. These two attitudes of mind are found, at present, among large numbers, especially in our own country. But even here it is felt by not a few that the condition is due solely to the force of circumstances. These have brought together so many of divergent views that it has become neither feasible nor possible for those of one belief to ostracize or persecute those of another. It does not seem to occur to some that, irrespective of such circumstances, toleration may be a matter of principle, logically resulting from a correct understanding of the nature of inspired truth itself. If this were presented in forms dictatorial, explicit, and infallible in expression, the individual or church possessing it might be justified in using not only persuasion, but force upon all who doubted, rejected, or ignored it. But the moment that one comes to think that this truth, owing to its very nature, must be imparted by way of suggestion, his

method of causing the world to receive it will be confined to an appeal to thought. A suggestion, like a puzzle, not only gives every one who hears it an independent right to interpret it in his own way, but is more likely to be solved in the right way in the degree in which every one who hears it has been allowed to contribute his share toward its solution.

Ay, when men desire the whole truth, each one's nature like a chart  
 Shall unfold to show what only all together can impart,  
 Till that time, though those about us vie to be the foes of truth,  
 Let it be its own defender ; they will learn in time, forsooth,  
 How much more may spring to light, where only wondering fancies  
     teem,  
 Than where listlessness in stupor slumbers on without a dream ;  
 How much more may be discerned, where love too lightly waives dis-  
     trust,  
 Than where mad intolerance gags a pleading doubt with naught  
     discust.  
 They will learn that wise men find that minds when trusted most,  
     confess  
 Where are hid the springs of thought which he who moves them needs  
     to press,  
 Learn that those who war with words must heed, ere crown'd with  
     victory,  
 Both the right array'd against them, and the wrong ; for charity,  
 First in logic as in worship, leads the mind's triumphant train.  
 'Tis the Christ, not Aristotle, holds the scepter of the brain.

*A Life in Song: Watching, XIX: Raymond.*

Another problem closely connected with the one just considered is how to reconcile in the minds of others who differ from ourselves their acceptance of what they can believe in our system of truth without the rejection of what they must continue to believe in their own. In this age many of us are constantly brought into contact with adherents of religions

both older and younger than ours are—with Hebrews, Buddhists, Confucianists, Mohammedans, Mormons, Spiritists, Christian Scientists, and so on. It is well-nigh impossible for one who has much knowledge of human nature, or confidence in it, to suppose that any of these systems contain nothing except what is false. They must all contain some truth or they could not appeal to the mind with the authority of truth. Why, then, do some of these systems tend—as can be proved of them, as, in fact, can be proved of some forms of Christianity—to error both in theory and practise—error, too, which, as rational humanitarians, to say no more, we sometimes deem it our duty to try to correct? Why, but because, in connection with the truth that is in them there is some untruth? How can we best correct this latter and prevent its deleterious effects? Is it by attacking the whole body of truth in which those whom we seek to influence believe? This would merely cause us to lose all influence with them. It would not unfrequently necessitate our including, among other things declared by us to be untrue, certain things which their own experience has proved to themselves, at least, to be the contrary. If we wish to influence them, must we not admit the fact that they are in possession of some truth? At first thought the admitting of this may seem simple enough; but, on second thought, we shall find the ground on which we can base the admission extremely difficult to explain either to ourselves or to others. It is difficult

because sometimes the very untruth which we deem it important to refute is, or is believed to be, an organic part of the system which they consider to be revealed. Our arguments against uncharity, zeal not according to knowledge, unreasonable bigotry, superstitious formalism, or the prevention of contagious diseases by faith might be convincing were it not one of the very things supposed to be taught by being revealed. If it be taught thus, or is believed to be taught thus, what is to be done? Nothing can be done, and done successfully, unless we can get people to perceive that the essential character of revelation is the imparting of truth by way of suggestion. When, and only when they perceive this, will they begin to perceive that it is essential that they should use their own minds in receiving truth; then only will they begin to compare different utterances, and the bearings of each, and the logical connections between them; and then only may we expect them, finally, to arrive at that to secure which is one of the reasons why the revelation is made suggestive, namely, a rational conclusion. Indeed, until in some way they have been brought to realize that it is the function of inspiration to influence mind, which is the same as to say to influence thinking, they will not exercise thought, or, as we say, common sense, when deciding what they should believe or do. The effect upon the world of not thinking, when manifested by large numbers of people, furnishes the worst possible menace to all that makes for peace,

enlightenment or progress. No animal is more dumb than a rational man when he becomes the slave of any theory that seems to justify his acting irrationally. Nor is it easy to perceive how a religious man can be prevented from feeling justified in acting thus by any other theory of revelation than the one presented in this volume.

Just here it would not be strange if some should be inclined to feel, notwithstanding all that has been said in this book of spirituality and faith, that, in some way, they have been unduly subordinated to certain supposed requirements of rationality and intelligence. For the benefit of such it seems well to show now that the theory here presented is the only one that can satisfactorily reconcile all these. This can be done by causing the reader to recognize that what is really antagonistic to spirituality, as a condition of mind, is not rationality, but materialism; and that what is really antagonistic to faith, as a motive, is not intelligence, but a presumption of knowledge, which is the very thing in which many a man, for the very reason that he is intelligent, does not indulge.

In order to accomplish our purpose, let us begin by getting as clear an idea as possible of what spirituality is, and of what is the connection between it and faith. A trustworthy conception of the former can perhaps be best obtained from what is probably the earliest attempt to explain it. In Rom. 8; 5, the Apostle Paul says: "They that are after the flesh do mind [*i.e.*,

seek, serve, obey] the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit." In this passage men are not divided according to their external religious affiliations. So far as the terms seem capable of interpretation, either the "material" or the "spiritual" may be found among Catholics, Presbyterians, or Friends, or, for that matter, among Mohammedans, Buddhists, or Confucianists. According to the apostle's use of the word, the one test dividing the two classes is that some "mind" the things of the flesh, and that others "mind" the things of the spirit; or, as the verse preceding this puts it, "walk after the flesh" or "after the spirit." What is meant by such phraseology is clear enough. We all recognize the classes to whom it refers. There are certain people in the world who walk after the flesh—*i.e.*, who, in the courses which they pursue, aim—not invariably, perhaps, but as a rule—to secure the pleasure, comfort, and welfare of their physical bodies. They indulge its appetites and lusts, if not by way of gluttony, then of greed, constantly, in disregard of the claims of others, adding to their possessions in the physical world about them, and thus increasing their influence on what may be termed the physical plane. There are others who do the contrary. In the courses which they pursue in life, they aim—not invariably, perhaps, but as a rule—to secure the pleasure, comfort, and welfare of that within them which does not pertain to the body. They are conscious of thoughts and emotions tending to certain



ideals and aspirations which give a man a distaste for the results of appetite and lust; *i.e.*, give him a consciousness that these thoughts and emotions can not enjoy free, unimpeded exercise in case the appetites and lusts be indulged. Therefore such persons practise, as applied to the latter, what is termed self-denial. Besides this, the same thoughts and emotions lead to a sense of sympathy and responsibility for others, which give a man a distaste for the results of greed aimed at increasing one's own possessions at the expense of his neighbors, or aimed, at least, at preventing the free, unimpeded exercise of that to which his sense of sympathy or responsibility prompts. Therefore such a person practises what is termed self-sacrifice. The sickly mother gives up her own health to secure that of her child; the volunteer patriot gives up his own life for that of the state; the foreign missionary gives up his own home to secure one for the savage. This giving up shows spirituality. Now notice that it shows this because it assigns preeminent importance not to what is without the mind, but to what is within it. The physical body and its physical surroundings contain things—all things—that can be seen or heard or handled; and these are clearly outside the mind—*i.e.*, outside the sphere in which thought and emotion are experienced. When the materialist is aiming for these things which he can see, hear, or handle, and can obtain or increase as a result of clearly comprehended calculation, he may be said to *know* them and, when

he deals with them, to be walking according to *knowledge*.

On the other hand, the ideals and aspirations, the promptings of sympathy and responsibility for others, which the spiritual man obeys are just as clearly inside the mind—*i.e.*, inside the sphere in which thought and emotion are experienced. Nor are all the processes of thought and emotion influencing the spiritual man inside the region of his own consciousness. Many of them are in the subconscious region. He does not always see—often he does not care to find out—the steps of logic, if indeed there be any, behind that course to which his conscience or conviction directs him. He does not always see—often he does not care to find out—the material end that his action will attain, or if any end worth having in this world be that which it will attain for himself. If he be a patriot, for instance, he goes where he is by no means assured that he will not meet his death. He says that he does so in order to serve his country. But what will be the use of a country to himself in case he has died for it? Why does he not go somewhere else and find some other country for which it will not be necessary for him to risk his life; existence in which country, therefore, will be sure to be of use to him? He certainly would do so if he were a man who walked according to merely knowledge. Why does he not run away? Because, so far as concerns his actions in this regard, he is a spiritual and not a material man. He is walking not

according to knowledge—*i.e.*, not in a sphere in which causes can be ascertained and results calculated;—he is walking according to faith—*i.e.*, in a sphere in which one can learn no more of causes and results than can be obtained from the promptings of ideals, aspirations, and sympathies which are impelling him from within, tho, of course, always in view of such realities, necessities, and possibilities as seem to be calling upon him from without.

It is not necessary to argue that all this is the same as to say that the promptings, obedience to which involves both spirituality and faith, are and must be—as has been shown to be true with reference to all influence exerted first upon the inner mind—suggestive. If they were explicit and dictatorial in character, men would be fully aware of what they were expected to do. They would be controlled by the letter of the law, not by its spirit, or that which is spiritual in the law. They would obey it without any exercise of faith, on account of knowledge. The self-sacrificing parent, soldier, or missionary is not influenced by considerations which he can knowingly calculate. He is influenced merely by his general determination to serve with the best motives and, as prompted by these, to the best of his ability, the family, the state, or the church which need his services. Notice, however, that this general determination does not lessen the rationality or intelligence with which the determination is formed, or put into execution. Nor, indeed, does it lessen the

exercise of either of these before he comes to his determination. No man can come to a wholly rational or intelligent conclusion if he fail to consider candidly and balance honestly against other considerations any consideration that should have weight in determining his conclusions. Who can say that suggestions from the subconscious mind should not be included among these considerations? Are not men rational and intelligent when, in fulfilment of the promptings of conscience, aspiration, or sympathy, they become self-sacrificing parents, soldiers, and missionaries? Accordingly, we perceive that it is not the material, but the spiritual man, not the man who walks wholly according to knowledge because of information that can be dictated, but the man who walks according to faith also because of thought or feeling that is suggested, who exhibits such rationality and intelligence as is influenced to the greatest degree, and from the greatest number of sources.

There are other religious problems for which the theory presented in this book seems to furnish a satisfactory solution. But they need not be considered here. All can be included, in a general way, among those that have been mentioned.

It only remains for the author now to write a single concluding sentence. Perhaps he may be excused for putting it in this form—that if his readers can not accept the premises, the methods, or the conclusions of his volume, nevertheless a sufficient excuse for the

writing of it will be furnished to himself, if only it have so emphasized the general subject as to convince thoughtful men of its supreme importance; and if only, influenced by an endeavor to correct whatever in the argument seems misleading, some wiser man than he shall let the world know why the theory that has here been presented is wrong, and why some other theory is right.





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